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واری سخنای دانی از

THE HOLY CITY of MEDINA

Sacred Space in Early Islamic Arabia

HARRY MUNT



کند وزینی بلیسه نیازاید
کوز یاشین دو کمه کی ساز ایتکل

که عجبیه قوکه نازاید
ی ترک ایله نیاز ایتکله



The Holy City of Medina

Sacred Space in Early Islamic Arabia

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University of Oxford



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To Rebekah

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Notes on the Text

The transliteration system used throughout this book for Arabic words and phrases follows a slightly modified version of the system recommended by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Some proper nouns are fully transliterated, but others with common English equivalents are not; so, for example, al-Ṭā'if, but Medina, not al-Madina. For the very occasional transliteration of Persian, a slightly modified version of the system used by the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* has been adopted. For the transliteration of languages other than Arabic and Persian, in particular of Syriac and pre-Islamic Arabian languages, I have tried to follow systems that appear to an outsider such as myself to be relatively standard in their respective fields.

As is now common in the field, both *hijrī* and Common Era dates are usually given together in the form *hijrī*/CE; Muḥammad's *hijra* to Medina thus took place in 1/622. On those few occasions when only a *hijrī* or a CE date is provided, this is made clear.

References have been given in a brief form in the footnotes, usually just the author's surname and a short version of the work's title, and fuller details can be found in the bibliography. A handful of works are referred to by other abbreviations, which are listed in the next section. The most common exception is encyclopaedia articles, which are referred to in the footnotes in the form: *Name [or abridged name] of encyclopaedia*, s.v. 'Title of article' (Author's name); for example, *EI*³, s.v. 'Bu'āth' (M. Lecker). The few citations from classical Greek and Latin sources are cited using referencing conventions common in works on ancient history. Papyri and pre-Islamic Arabian inscriptions are referred to using

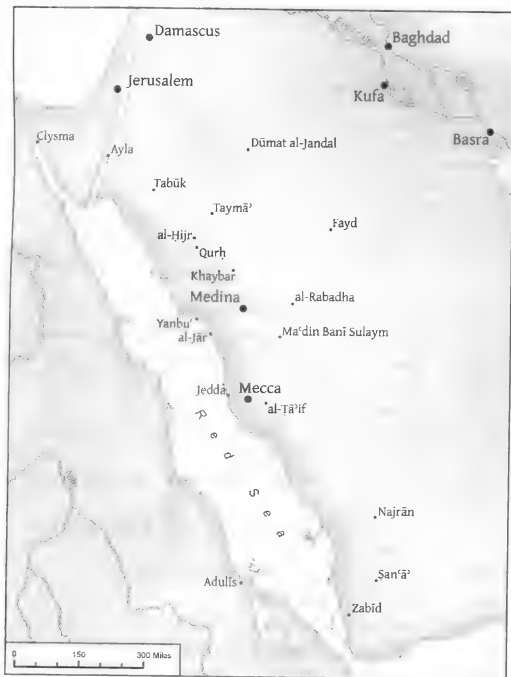
standard sigla, but a more precise reference to a published edition/translation is also always provided.

All translations from the Qur'ān are my own, unless otherwise stated, although I have to acknowledge the considerable debt I owe to two previously published translations: A. J. Arberry's *The Koran Interpreted*, 2 vols. (London, 1955) and A. Jones's *The Qur'ān* (Cambridge, 2007).

There is one final stylistic abbreviation of which the reader should be aware. Many mentions of Muḥammad in Arabic and Persian works are followed by one of a handful of standard invocations for God's blessing upon him, sometimes also upon his family and/or Companions. In general, I do not translate these blessings to save cluttering the text, but I do indicate where they appear in the editions I have used by inserting the abbreviation '(ṣ)'.

Abbreviations

AAE	<i>Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy</i>
BASIC	<i>Shahîd, Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus des séances de l'année: académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>
EI ²	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 2nd ed., eds. H. A. R. Gibb et al., 13 vols. Leiden, 1960–2009.
EI ³	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam Three</i> , eds. K. Fleet et al. Leiden, 2007–.
EQ	<i>Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ân</i> , ed. J. D. McAuliffe, 6 vols. Leiden, 2001–6.
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
ILS	<i>Islamic Law and Society</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSAI	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
MUSJ	<i>Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph</i>
PSAS	<i>Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies</i>



MAP 1. The early Islamic Hijāz.



MAP 2. The sacred landscape of early Islamic Medina.



Introduction

Throughout Islamic history sacred spaces have always held immense political, religious and cultural significance; the king of Saudi Arabia today holds as his official title *khādim al-ḥaramayn*, 'Guardian of the Two Sanctuaries' (Mecca and Medina), and more than two million Muslims now travel from all over the world each year to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Many of them will also visit Medina.¹ As the town that offered the Prophet protection when his own people denied him, as the location of the first Muslim polity, the first mosque, Muḥammad's sanctuary (*ḥaram*) and his grave, and as the earliest centre of the Islamic empire at the time when the Muslim armies were conquering most of the Middle East, Medina's position in the salvation history of the Muslim community is clear today.

The continued political valence of the title *khādim al-ḥaramayn* – a title apparently first used by Saladin in an inscription of 587/1191 in Jerusalem² – and the number of contemporary visitors demonstrate the staggering success of those who have worked over the centuries to patronise Medina's sacred spaces and to promote its widely accepted status as a holy city. In such modern studies as exist of Medina's sacred space(s) and its history as a holy city for Muslims worldwide, scholars commonly assert that the town was 'sanctified' originally through the Prophet's emigration (Ar. *hijra*) there from Mecca in 1/622, his establishment of a *ḥaram* there, and then further by his death and burial there. Albert Arazi, in a

¹ For a study of modern pilgrimage to Medina, see Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*, 227–76.

² *EP*, s.v. 'Khādim al-Ḥaramayn' (B. Lewis).

stimulating article, summarised this view succinctly: 'The *hijra* to Medina, ancient Yathrib, gave that town a new dimension, that of sanctity.' Then, after the establishment of a *ḥaram* there and with the placement of Muḥammad's grave there, Medina attained 'a surplus of sanctity'.³

There is little doubt that Muḥammad's *hijra* to Medina and his death were events with enormous repercussions for the early Muslim community.⁴ We may, however, have good reason to feel unsatisfied with a narrative of Medina's sanctification, its emergence as a holy city, that considers most of the process to have been over shortly after the time of Muḥammad's death in 11/632. This narrative leaves a number of questions unanswered. Put simply, we should not assume that Medina would have invoked the same significance for Muslims of the second/eighth or third/ninth centuries as it had for those of the first/seventh. The purpose of this book is to present a greater sense of the diachronic and gradual processes by which Medina's sanctity was first developed and then consolidated. Chapter 1 investigates some practices of sanctifying space which existed in the Ḥijāz on the eve of Muḥammad's career; the following chapter then seeks to explain why he chose to declare a *ḥaram* – one of the most socially and religiously important of these pre-Islamic forms of sacred space – at Medina and, in doing so, how he adapted that pre-Islamic practice. In Chapter 3, I address the developments in ideas of what a *ḥaram* was after Muḥammad's death and the subsequent rapid conquest by his followers of widespread territories with different religious and political traditions of their own. It is to be expected that any such developments would affect doctrines about Medina's *ḥaram* and its perceived sanctity, and we will see that some Muslims even came to question the existence of a *ḥaram* at Medina.

The second half of the book takes the discussion beyond Medina's *ḥaram*. Chapter 4 turns to the creation of a sacred landscape in Medina

³ Arazi, 'Matériaux', 177, 179.

⁴ Two recent books have addressed the significance of the second of these events: Powers, *Muḥammad Is Not the Father*; Shoemaker, *Death of a Prophet*. The significance of the *hijra* is amply testified by the fact that the Muslim calendar came, relatively early, to be counted from this date. The earliest extant usage of this calendar system comes famously in a bilingual Greek-Arabic papyrus dated to 30 Pharmouthi of indiction one (in Greek) and 'the month of Jumādā I of the year 22' (in Arabic), both of which coincide to give April 643 CE. This, and no extant other document of the first/seventh century, however, offers any explicit rationale for the inauguration of this new calendar. For an edition with discussion of the papyrus (PERF 558), see Grohmann, 'Aperçu', 40–4; also see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 547–8. For a discussion of the evolution of the significance of *hijra* in Islamic thought, see Crone, 'First-century concept'.

by caliphs and the town's local historians through the construction and discussion of numerous specific sites scattered across the oasis which commemorated Muḥammad's career there as both a prophet and the founder of a social and political community. Chapter 5 seeks to answer the surprisingly difficult question of when and why Muslims from across the territory of the caliphate started to undertake pilgrimages to Medina. These chapters demonstrate two broad points. Firstly, that the doctrines associated with Medina's holiness, and the reasons behind it, did not remain static; rather they were continually renegotiated and debated. Secondly, that Medina's widely venerated sanctity was a product not only of Muḥammad's actions, but also of those caliphs and religious scholars who among them laid claim to his political, religious and legal authority in the centuries following his death. In Chapter 6, I draw things together by investigating why so many caliphs and scholars invested considerable effort to promote Medina's sanctity and to transform the town into a holy city. I show that this caliphal and scholarly patronage of Medina's sacred spaces is intimately linked to the caliphs' and scholars' gradually emerging need to establish that they had legitimately inherited their exercise of political, legal and religious authority from the Prophet, who had exercised such authority himself, as God's final Messenger, for the first Muslim community at Medina.

The focus of a large proportion of modern scholarship on early Islamic history has demonstrated how gradually many of the doctrines, sectarian affiliations, ideas about the exercise of religious and political authority and many more issues associated with 'classical' (for want of a better word) Islam emerged. Studies of evolving attitudes towards sacred spaces have played their part in this modern scholarly endeavour, with a particularly heavy focus on Mecca and Jerusalem.⁵ Early Islamic Jerusalem provides a particularly stark example of the emphasis recent scholarship

⁵ For Mecca, see in particular the relevant studies by Hawting given in the bibliography; also see Rubin, 'Ka'ba'; Crone, 'First-century concept', 385–7; McMillan, *Meaning of Mecca*; and, famously, Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, esp. 21–6. Among the many studies of early Islamic Jerusalem, see, with further bibliography, Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*; idem, 'Abd al-Malik'; idem, 'Why did 'Abd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock?'; and Lassner, 'Muslims on the sanctity of Jerusalem'. There are also a large number of studies on early Islamic attitudes towards Jerusalem by Livne-Kafri, including, for example, 'Note', and 'Jerusalem', and some apposite points in Rubin, 'Between Arabia and the Holy Land'. Research has increasingly demonstrated that claims for sanctity were by no means restricted to Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem in the first three or four Islamic centuries. Two classic studies are Kister, 'You shall only set out for three mosques', and idem, 'Sanctity joint and divided'; recently, Yaron Friedmann has put forward bold claims regarding Kufa in 'Kufa is better'.

has placed on the fact that developing and evolving Islamic doctrines – in this case particularly concerning attitudes to sacred space – should be studied with reference to the relevant historical backdrop: a mid seventh-century CE Armenian historian gives us early evidence of Jerusalem's and Palestine's importance as a land that was holy to the nascent Muslim community,⁶ but few historians nowadays would seek to understand the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān's (r. 65–86/685–705) construction of the Dome of the Rock without reference to the period of civil war that engulfed the Islamic world during the late first/seventh century, generally known as the second *fitna*. The aim of this book is to put within a proper historical framework the development of ideas connected to Medina's sacred space and its emergence as a holy city.

This, then, is a study of a sacred space and a holy city in its early Islamic and western Arabian contexts. There is a long history in Western scholarship of attempts to define the terms 'holy' and 'sacred', with perhaps the most influential early discussions being those of Émile Durkheim and Rudolf Otto. Durkheim, whose *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* was first published in 1912, argued that one major feature of all religions is their classification of objects as either 'sacred' or 'profane', and that '[t]he sacred thing is *par excellence* that which the profane should not touch, and cannot touch with impunity'. Sacred things are protected by interdictions, while profane things have interdictions applied to them to keep them away from the sacred; transfer is possible between the two states, but only through the enactment of specified rites.⁷ Otto, whose detailed study *Das Heilige* appeared shortly afterwards in 1917, separated the 'holy' (*Heilige*) into two distinct parts. In the first part, the term has come to be equated with everything that is 'completely good' or 'perfectly moral', while the second meaning – which Otto calls the 'numinous' – 'cannot be strictly defined', although his choice of the Latin word *numen*, 'divine will', as the basis for his term suggests that he saw this aspect of the holy as thoroughly and totally connected to God or another divine power.⁸ A century of scholarship following pioneers such as Durkheim and Otto has not, to my knowledge, led to the establishment of a consensus on an exact

⁶ *Armenian History*, i, 95–7, 102–3.

⁷ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 36–42 (quote from 40). Durkheim's definition of the sacred in opposition to the profane, that is, what it is not, was also employed by some groups in classical and late antiquity; for the rabbis, see Fine, *This Holy Place*, 11. For one attempt to understand how Arabic-speaking Muslims have sought to define the sacred, see Gardet, 'Notion et sens'.

⁸ Otto, *Idea of the Holy*, passim but esp. 5, 7, 110.

definition of the holy and the sacred. A concept that is tricky to define precisely, however, can still hold heuristic value, perhaps especially if understood quite loosely. I use the two terms as synonyms to refer broadly to something associated with the divine that is protected by regulations and/or rites from things that are not holy/sacred.

Sacred space in turn is a concept which anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists and historians of religion have analysed extensively.⁹ Their work suggests that a sacred space is one clearly defined and distinguished from other spaces, and one which focuses attention on the objects within it and the actions performed within it. There is an enormous range of different types of sacred spaces, from individual rooms within a building, to single structures often known as shrines (for example, temples, saints' tombs, churches, synagogues, mosques), to entire cities or vast, uninhabited spaces. Those features shared by the variety of spaces considered sacred often include clearly defined boundaries, certain rituals which can only be performed within, and special regulations which must be adhered to in order to enter them and/or within them; the latter are frequently aimed at ensuring the maintenance of strict levels of ritual purity. Many sacred spaces are sites of pilgrimage, often at specific times, and as such can interact with sacred time. On a practical, more everyday level, sacred spaces usually serve to meet a number of social and economic needs required by the group(s) that considers them as such; at the same time, the regulations attached to them may be guaranteed by threats of terrible punishment for those who err, but such measures do not always prevent them from being disobeyed by those who feel that they can get away with this. Ultimately, the term 'sacred space' retains a greater value, especially as a comparative tool, if it is not restricted too tightly to places that share all of these features. For my purposes here, a space is considered sacred if it is clearly distinguished from other spaces, through defined boundaries and/or particular regulations and rites, and it is held to have a special connection with God/the divine. This connection can, of course, be made through a venerated representative of the divine, such as a prophet, angel or holy man.¹⁰

⁹ For some classic introductory discussions, see Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 367–87; idem, *Sacred and the Profane*, 20–65; Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*; idem, *Imagining Religion*, esp. 53–65; idem, *To Take Place*. For two good discussions of the usefulness of some historians' approaches to sacred space, see Friedland and Hecht, 'Politics of sacred place', 24–8; Hamilton and Spicer, 'Defining the holy'.

¹⁰ The social significance of holy men in late antiquity was underlined in Brown, 'Rise and function', although cf. in part now idem, *Authority and the Sacred*, 55–78. For the early Islamic period, see Robinson, 'Prophecy and holy men'.

When a particularly widely venerated sacred space covers an entire urban area, or when a number of sacred spaces are concentrated in a single urban area, that area can then be called a 'holy city'.¹¹ By this definition, all holy cities possess sacred space(s), but not all urban areas with sacred spaces should be considered holy cities. This book's effort to contextualise Medina's emergence and appeal as a holy city in the early Islamic centuries will, therefore, investigate how Muslims came to see spaces in and around the town as sacred to begin with, but also how and why those sacred spaces continued to be venerated so widely across the Islamic world.

'HOW ON EARTH COULD PLACES BECOME HOLY?'

It was with this question that R. A. Markus entitled an important article, published in 1994, on the processes through which Christians in the fourth century CE overcame their earlier hesitancy to grant particular places on earth any higher degree of holiness. The question seems odd in some respects because of the relative abundance of sacred sites of one sort or another across the world, throughout most known religions. As Markus himself noted after posing his question, 'An earlier generation of scholars of religion would not have seen a problem here.'¹² A famous Romanian scholar of religion, Mircea Eliade, had pre-empted Markus's question with the statement that, 'Every kratophany and hierophany whatsoever transforms the place where it occurs: hitherto profane, it is thenceforward a sacred area.'¹³

Eliade's statement is certainly direct and, on one level, appealing; it seems obvious that for any place to be considered sacred, some great manifestation of the divine, a hierophany, should have taken place there. Yet for the historian, this immediately raises questions. A hierophany can only be considered as such in the eye of the beholder; someone needs to both witness it – in one way or another – and consider it as such. It is no good for the sacred simply to make itself manifest; people have to sit up and take note. The logical conclusion is that every manifestation of the sacred will fit into a historical context, otherwise it will be misunderstood.¹⁴

¹¹ For a similar definition, see Peters, *Jerusalem and Mecca*, 3.

¹² Markus, 'How on earth could places become holy?', quotation from 258.

¹³ Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 367; for a summary and critique of Eliade's work on sacred space, see Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 88–103.

¹⁴ See, for example, Brown, *Cult of Saints*, 48: 'Beliefs, for instance, must be set precisely against their social context.' Or, as one ṣa'ṣa' b. Ṣūḥān al-'Abdī is said to have put it during a conversation with Mu'āwiya, according to Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 115: 'Surely the

How places initially come to be considered sacred is only one part of the problem. There is also the rather obvious fact that all such spaces are different in so many aspects. Certain generalities may be shared by many – sacred spaces are, for example often associated with certain topographical features, such as mountains, rivers, springs or stones¹⁵ – but these often operate at little more than a superficial level and, in any case, their appearance can hardly be expected universally. Even one place can function as a sacred space in different ways for different communities at different times. Jerusalem is the most obvious case in point: not only did Jews, Christians and Muslims hold that city holy for different reasons, but members of the same faith treated it differently. Late antique and medieval Christians, for example, debated among themselves the legitimacy of pilgrimage to Jerusalem.¹⁶

The appropriation or sharing of one group's sacred space by another is a common phenomenon. A well-known example is the Umayyad caliph al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik's (r. 86–96/705–15) decision to construct his new mosque in Damascus on the site of a Christian church dedicated to John the Baptist, the latter itself having been constructed on the site of an earlier temple dedicated to Jupiter.¹⁷ Again, consideration of the historical context is crucial here. Older sacred spaces have not always been appropriated by conquerors or other newcomers, and plenty of examples exist where a given holy site has fallen out of use over time. A good case is the gradual abandonment of the shrine of St Sergius at Ruṣāfa in northern Syria during the centuries following the Islamic conquest. This shrine provides a noteworthy example of a sacred space that appears to have continued to thrive immediately after the conquest, but ultimately did fall out of use. Why some sacred spaces endure and others fall aside is a question that can only be answered by going beyond the search for the origins of a given place's sanctity.¹⁸

On a more abstract level the problems persist even further: How can we reconcile the existence in Judaism, Christianity and Islam of specific locations held sacred together with canonical scriptural injunctions that

land does not make its people holy, but rather its people make it holy' (*fa-inna al-arḍ lā tuqaddisu ahlāhā lākinnā ahlāhā yuqaddisūnāhā*).

¹⁵ A classic study is Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 165–212; for more recent comments in this vein in a study of medieval Syrian sacred spaces, see Meri, *Cult of Saints*, 12, 14, 47–9.

¹⁶ Constable, 'Opposition to pilgrimage'; Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred*.

¹⁷ This and other late antique examples are discussed in Fowden, 'Sharing holy places'.

¹⁸ In the case of St Sergius at Ruṣāfa, fortunately, such a study exists: Fowden, *Barbarian Plain*, esp. 174–91 on the site's post-conquest history.

God is everywhere and can be worshipped everywhere? There are plenty of Quranic passages in favour of the idea of sacred spaces (discussed further in Chapter 1), but nonetheless Q2.142 states:

The fools among the people will say, 'Whatsoever has led them away from their *qibla* to which they used to adhere?' Say, 'To God belong the east and the west; He guides whomsoever He wishes to a straight path.'

According to some commentators on the Qur'ān, one of the reasons for God's refusal to grant Moses' request that He make his community the chosen one is that the Israelites would not make prayer places (*masājid*) of the entire earth, but would instead pray only in the synagogue (*kanīsa*).¹⁹ Certain aspects of this long-enduring tension have been nicely drawn out in a study of seventeenth-century New England Puritans, which demonstrated that although they rejected in principle the idea of sacred space and time, in practice they continued to hold certain times, notably Sundays, and places sacred.²⁰

It was perhaps to work around conundrums such as this that scholars of many religions came up with the idea of grades or a hierarchy of sanctity. Durkheim did not accept a purely hierarchical distinction between the sacred and the profane – indeed he insisted on the absolute distinction between the two – but he still did accept the existence of 'sacred things of every degree'.²¹ The rabbis, for example, applied a hierarchy to sacred space in an oft-cited passage from the Mishnah, *Kelim* 1.6–9, which outlines ten grades of holiness, starting with 'the land of Israel is holier than all other lands', and ending with the most sacred 'holy of holies' inside the Temple.²² In an important study of the general phenomenon of holy cities in Islam, Gustave von Grunebaum suggested a tripartite taxonomy of sacred space, in increasing order of significance²³: sanctity deriving from the *baraka*, 'blessing', dispensed by the tomb of a prophet or a 'saint'²⁴; sanctity stemming from a place's soteriological

¹⁹ Discussion in Kister, '*Lā taqra'ū*', 151–5. Among many relevant Biblical injunctions, mention can be made of 1 Kings 8.27 and Acts 17.24.

²⁰ Walsh, 'Holy time'. On this problem in late antique Christianity, see Markus, 'How on earth could places become holy?'; it is also worth bearing in mind Jonathan Z. Smith's general dichotomy (*Map Is Not Territory*, esp. 101) between 'locative' and 'utopian' visions of the world.

²¹ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, esp. 37–9.

²² Bokser, 'Approaching sacred space', esp. 289–90; Fine, *This Holy Place*, 12. Muslim scholars writing on the distinctive merits (*faḍā'il*) of Syria picked up and adapted this rabbinic hierarchy; see, for example, Ibn al-Murajjā, *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, 115 (§136).

²³ Von Grunebaum, 'Sacred character'.

²⁴ For more on *baraka* from saints' tombs, see Meri, *Cult of Saints*, esp. 12–58.

role; sanctity stemming from an area's cosmological significance.²⁵ For the role of sacred spaces in Islamic history, M. J. Kister has since complicated this picture by demonstrating how separate places could combine and thus reinforce each other's holiness. Some medieval scholars, for example, recommended setting out on the pilgrimage to Mecca from the Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem, while others noted that those who visited the tombs of Muḥammad in Medina and Abraham in Hebron in the same year would enter Paradise.²⁶ These sacred hierarchies and interrelationships could change over time – some places could become more sacred, others less so – and such alterations can only be understood fully within their appropriate historical context.

Maurice Halbwachs, in his study of the sacred topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land, has perhaps best articulated the suggestion that when spaces remain sacred the doctrines and associations attached to them tend to develop to retain their relevance.²⁷ As such, the creation and maintenance of sacred space is best understood as a process rather than an act that occurred at a single moment in time. The reasons for any long-lived sacred space's acceptance as such have to evolve and adapt over time as political and social circumstances change; as such, ideas about the space's original *raison d'être* can change as well. Sacred space is culturally constructed and reconstructed. As Halbwachs put it:

Sacred places thus commemorate not facts certified by contemporary witnesses but rather beliefs born perhaps not far from these places and strengthened by taking root in this environment.

Whatever epoch is examined, attention is directed not toward the first events, or perhaps the origin of these events, but rather toward the group of believers and toward their commemorative work. When one looks at the physiognomy of the holy places in successive times, one finds the character of these groups inscribed.²⁸

This is perhaps an obvious idea, but nonetheless a powerful and thoroughly convincing one. The world is littered with places formerly perceived as sacred which are no longer seen as such because the beliefs

²⁵ Von Grunebaum fitted Medina into the second of these categories. For a fourth-/tenth-century narrative which hints at a similar taxonomy, see al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 166–7; also discussed in Lassner, 'Muslims on the sanctity of Jerusalem', 178–9.

²⁶ See Kister, 'Sanctity joint and divided', esp. 27 for these two examples.

²⁷ Halbwachs, *Topographie légendaire*; the conclusion to this work is translated in idem, *On Collective Memory*, 193–225.

²⁸ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 199, 234–5 [= idem, *Topographie légendaire*, 157, 205]. Essentially the same point has been made in Smith, *Imagining Religion*, 36–52, for example at 44: 'sacred persistence ... is primarily exegesis.'

attached to them did not remain relevant. There are also numerous examples of sacred sites that remained in use for long periods, sometimes over millennia, but to which the exegetical legends attached substantially altered over time. A study of the shrine of Aḥmad Yasavī (d. 562/1166) in Yasī (now in southern Kazakhstan), built by Temür (r. 771–807/1370–1405) in the late eighth/fourteenth century, has shown how even over a relatively short period the extent hagiographical and doctrinal material connected to that sacred space developed in its environment after the original foundation of the shrine.²⁹ I will demonstrate throughout this book that Medina's position as an Islamic holy city was consolidated over the first three centuries AH largely because the ideas and doctrines attached to its sacred spaces evolved and were adapted over time after the death of Muḥammad to retain their relevance for influential groups of scholars and rulers.

It remains here to note the intimate connection at most points of Islamic history between sacred space, economics and politics. The economic function of holy places is often immediately apparent: numerous such locations have been associated with markets and trade fairs, particularly but not exclusively connected to times of pilgrimage. The famous market fairs of late antique and medieval Europe and the Mediterranean are a good case for this point, as are the pre-Islamic pilgrim fairs in the vicinity of Mecca, at Ukāz, Dhū al-Majāz and Majanna.³⁰

The close connection between politics and sacred spaces, particularly but not always through rulers' patronage, has already been seen in the example of Temür's construction of the shrine of Aḥmad Yasavī. Modern scholars have discussed various aspects of this issue, and Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, in their study of conflicts over Jerusalem in the twentieth century, have made a forceful plea for historians to take the political context of the development of sacred spaces much more seriously.³¹ Why have rulers and elites – and, more recently, politicians – been so eager to promote their attachment to sacred spaces and to control others' access to them? One reason is simply control. Many sacred spaces, because of the widespread veneration attached to them, were areas which left uncontrolled could offer an ideological focus for opposition. Also very

²⁹ DeWeese, 'Sacred places'. For an example, from northern Iraq, of a site whose sanctity can be witnessed in the early first millennium BCE and again in late antiquity, see Walker, 'Legacy of Mesopotamia'.

³⁰ On these, see Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 170–80; Peters, *Hajj*, 33–5.

³¹ Friedland and Hecht, 'Politics of sacred place', 23; see also Peters, *Jerusalem and Mecca*, 33.

enlightening for this question is Beatrice Forbes Manz's recent study of shrines during the reign of the Timurid ruler Shāhrukh (r. 807–50/1405–47) in Iran. Manz notes that rulers felt a need to be seen in association with the supernatural powers and that they could do this in two main ways: the first was through either having or appearing in dreams, and the second was through associating themselves, usually through patronage, with one or more sacred spaces. Perhaps most important is her suggestion that both rulers and scholars not only had the option of patronising new holy sites, but also had to work with already existing sacred spaces.³² We will see over the course of what follows in this book that caliphs and scholars promoted certain sites in and pilgrimage to Medina partly out of recognition of the ideological benefits of close association with a town already considered sacred, but that in doing so they also helped to build up and reaffirm the town's status as a holy city.

LOCAL HISTORIES OF MEDINA

Medina's sanctity was discussed by Muslim scholars working within a number of genres and consequently this study is based on a wide variety of sources, ranging from histories and biographical dictionaries to compilations of *ḥadīth*, works on Islamic law, literary compilations and more besides. That said, the book could not have been written without the survival of Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh al-Samhūdī's (d. 911/1506) large local history of Medina, the *Wafā' al-wafā' bi-akbbār dār al-muṣṭafā*.³³ To some extent this is because of al-Samhūdī's own investigative nature and the scrupulousness of his research; to a much larger degree, however, it is because his work includes hundreds of citations from much earlier, now lost local histories of Medina.³⁴ The four most oft-cited early historians of Medina in al-Samhūdī's work are Ibn Zabāla (d. after 199/814), al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (d. 256/870), 'Umar b. Shabba (d. 262/876) and Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī (d. 277/890). Of their works, a decent portion, although

³² Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion*, 178–207.

³³ The most important studies of this work and the life of its author are al-Sāmarrāī's introduction to his edition of the text and al-Jāsir, 'al-Samhūdī'.

³⁴ Other extant local histories of the sixth/twelfth century and later are also important witnesses to some of these earlier lost works – and will be cited as such throughout the footnotes in this book – but none are as significant as the *Wafā' al-wafā'*. These other works are: Ibn al-Najjār (d. 643/1245), *al-Durra al-thamīna*; al-Āqshahrī (d. 739/1338), *al-Rawda al-firdawsīyya*; al-Matārī (d. 741/1340), *Tārīf*; al-Marjānī (d. after 770/1369), *Bahjat al-nufus*; al-Marāghī (d. 816/1414), *Taḥqīq al-nuṣra*; and al-Firzābādī (d. 817/1415), *al-Maghānim al-muṭāba*.

certainly not all, of Ibn Shabba's history is all that survives in an independent manuscript.³⁵ The contents of the local histories by Ibn Zabāla, Ibn Shabba and Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī – all of whom were cited more frequently than al-Zubayr b. Bakkār – are discussed and analysed in more detail in Chapter 4; here, however, some introductory points seem to be in order.³⁶

Firstly, it should be made clear from the outset that these histories do not seem to have been either chronicles or biographical dictionaries, such as appear for many other towns and regions of the Islamic world.³⁷ They rather had a more topographical focus, not exclusively but mainly outlining the history of certain natural topographical features and man-made sites within Medina. This material is by no means devoid of interest for the political, economic and social history of the town, as we will see, but it does mean that we have to ask different questions of it than we can of histories of other cities and provinces in the caliphate.³⁸ Secondly, and quite importantly, the authors of these works were of rather varied backgrounds. Ibn Zabāla was, so far as we can tell, a lifelong and proud inhabitant of Medina, and the extant citations from his work display no obvious sectarian affiliation.³⁹ Ibn Shabba was a Basran who moved first to Baghdad and then to Samarra, where he refused to give in to pressure during the famous *miḥna* to testify to the createdness of the Qur'ān.⁴⁰ He is credited with histories of Mecca, Kufa and Basra as well as Medina, and there is no evidence that he ever visited the latter, although it is quite possible that he did. Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī was another lifelong resident of Medina and Mecca, and a descendant of the fourth Shī'ī *imām*, 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn (d. ca.

³⁵ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh al-Madīna*. The manuscript was preserved in a private library in Medina and was seemingly copied in the mid-to-late ninth/fifteenth century. It may have been, but was equally probably not, the version of the work to which al-Samhūdī himself had access. For discussions, see al-Jāsir, 'Mu'allafāt', 328–30; Shaltūt, 'Ta'rikh'.

³⁶ Two pioneering analyses of these authors and their works are al-'Alī, 'al-Mu'allafāt al-'arabiyya', and al-Jāsir, 'Mu'allafāt'. I have studied Ibn Zabāla's *Akhhbār al-Madīna* in considerably more detail in 'Writing the history' and 'Prophet's city'.

³⁷ The bibliography on medieval Arabic and Persian local historiography is steadily increasing, but a good introduction can be found in Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 138–42.

³⁸ Cf., for example, the studies of the relations between local elites and representatives of the caliphal government based on local histories of Egypt and the Jazīra in Kennedy, 'Central government'; Robinson, *Empire and Elites*.

³⁹ Munt, 'Writing the history', esp. 11–13, 26, n. 121, with further references.

⁴⁰ The fullest biographical sources for Ibn Shabba are Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i/ii, 344–7; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, xi, 208–10; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxi, 386–90; al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar al-'ālam al-nubalā'*, xii, 369–72. For modern discussions, as well as those works cited earlier, see *EP*, s.v. 'Umar b. Shabba' (S. Leder).

95/713–14). His family was frequently at odds with the Abbasid caliphs and his grandfather, Ja'far b. 'Ubayd Allāh, was recognised as an *imām* by some Zaydīs. As well as writing a work about Medina, Yaḥyā was also the author of the oldest extant genealogy of the family of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁴¹ With this background, it is unsurprising that his material displays pro-Alid inclinations, but although he was almost certainly Shī'ī it is difficult to ascertain which particular Shī'ī school of thought he adhered to. The various backgrounds of these historians of Medina mean that modern historians have a refreshing variety of opinions concerning Medina's status and its holy sites in the early Islamic centuries to work with.

Finally, there are the related issues of how these historians' works and material were originally composed and then preserved over centuries so that later scholars such as al-Samhūdī could use them as sources for their own works, and how accurately the latter did so. Regarding the second of these two questions, there is good reason to be optimistic. A comparison of a sample of al-Samhūdī's quotations from Ibn Shabba's work with the same passages as they appear in the extant manuscript of the latter has reinforced al-Samhūdī's reputation for scrupulousness.⁴² At the same time, it is abundantly clear that later authors did not cite the entirety of these earlier works, nor did they comment much on the original organisation of their material, so we cannot use the citations in later histories of Medina to 'reconstruct' fully those lost works. It is also clear, and now we turn to the first of these two final questions, that neither Ibn Zabāla, Ibn Shabba nor Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī ever composed what we would today consider a fixed-form, finalised work. What survived to be used by historians such as al-Samhūdī was rather redactions of material taught by these earlier scholars transmitted by their students. These three scholars can be considered the 'authors' of the local histories that went under their respective names in the sense that the vast majority of the material within was theirs and they clearly played a considerable role in shaping the organisation of that material; we must realise, however, that later hands played a role in creating the versions of the works available to later historians of Medina and in the extant manuscript of Ibn Shabba's history.⁴³

⁴¹ Abū Naṣr al-Bukhārī, *Sirr al-silsila*, 71–2; al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, I, 182; II, 412; al-Kāẓim's introduction to his edition of Yaḥyā, *Mu'aqqibīn*; Bernheimer, 'Alids', 18–19.

⁴² Munt, 'Writing the history', 6–11.

⁴³ Two particularly influential works on the transmission of knowledge in early Islam, which have greatly influenced my understanding of the transmission of these local histories of Medina, are Schoeler, *Oral and the Written*, and idem, *Genesis of Literature*. For much more detailed justification for this view of the transmission of Ibn Zabāla's

In spite of the difficulties, we have a relatively large amount of local historical material relating to Medina from the late second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, which, judiciously handled and approached with the right questions in mind, can teach us a considerable amount about the history of the town over the first three centuries AH. The optimism can only ever be partial for the history of the early Islamic Hījāz. We still have extremely little material that can be dated with certainty to the first/seventh century, or indeed for much of the first half of the second/eighth century,⁴⁴ and – as students of Islamic history are now repeatedly told – we are left with the likelihood that the later material about those earlier years, although interesting and useful, always tells us much more about the eras during which it was compiled than about the early decades about which it purports to inform us.

For other regions, especially Egypt and Syria, documentary and material evidence can help considerably. Some regions, again notably Syria and the Jazīra, even have earlier literary sources written by non-Muslims that can help.⁴⁵ Medina and the Hījāz have virtually no such corroborating evidence. Relatively little archaeological work has been carried out in the region, and although this is beginning to change it is extremely unlikely that there will ever be any such investigation of Mecca and Medina themselves for the obvious religious and political reasons; in any case, much Saudi work improving the infrastructure of the two cities has almost certainly destroyed most of what was there.⁴⁶ So, any history of early Islamic Medina is going to have to rely more on texts than on material evidence.⁴⁷ This not only means that we have very little contemporary evidence for the town's history before the late second/eighth century, but also that what we do have reflects overwhelmingly the concerns of

Akbbār al-Madīna, see Munt, 'Writing the history', 14–18; for a similar understanding of Ibn Shabba's work, see Günther, 'New results', 12–13; Schoeler, *Genesis of Literature*, 111–12. The recensions of Yaḥyā's history of Medina are discussed further in Chapter 4, n. 15.

⁴⁴ For a recent attempt to improve this situation regarding material about the career of Muhammad in Mecca and Medina, see Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte*; but cf. Shoemaker, 'In search', and then the response to that by Görke, Motzki and Schoeler, 'First century sources'.

⁴⁵ In general, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*. For just one example of the usefulness of relatively early Syriac chronicles against which to counterbalance the Arabic narratives, see Robinson, 'Conquest of Khūzistān'.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*, 188: 'Within Medina's historic city centre, there are today as good as no historical buildings any more.'

⁴⁷ A point Wansbrough makes forcefully in his *Res Ipsa Loquitur*.

religious and scholarly elites. The texts cannot be put aside, however, and we can learn a great deal if we use them properly. As the English chronicler Ranulf Higden (d. 1364 CE) wrote in his *Polychronicon*, a history of the world from Creation to 1340 CE, 'Indeed, the apostle did not say that all things that are written are true, but that all things that are written, are written that we may learn from them.'⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Cited in Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 56.

I

Haram and *Himā*: Sacred Space in the Pre-Islamic Hijāz

Muḥammad was born (in the late sixth century CE) into a world full of what we would now recognise as sacred spaces, places separated from the outside by clear boundaries and/or regulations and perceived to have a special connection with the divine. All regions of the Near East, including the Arabian Peninsula, have provided examples of places accorded great religious significance virtually since the beginning of recorded history. Inhabitants of the Hijāz were certainly aware of the existence of such places: the Qurʾān, to give just one example, states that the first – thus implying the existence of others – blessed (*mubārak*) house (*bayt*, also ‘temple’) founded was at a place called Bakka (Q3.96). Later Muslim scholars, such as Ibn al-Kalbī (d. ca. 204/819–20) in his *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, envisaged a pre-Islamic Hijāz full of idols and shrines, and, whatever one’s opinion on the reliability of the information contained in his work, it would surely be strange if the Hijāz of Muḥammad’s day were an environment bereft of such spaces, whatever deity or deities they were dedicated to.¹ All surrounding regions had plenty of places that some considered sacred, and the northern Hijāz certainly had them in previous centuries, for example at al-Ḥijr/Madā’in Šālīḥ and the temple dedicated at Rawwāfa (about forty-five miles southwest of Tabūk) during the reign of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–80 CE).² How spaces were considered sacred in Muḥammad’s time in Arabia and the Hijāz,

¹ A detailed (and convincing) critique of Ibn al-Kalbī’s work is Hawting, *Idea of Idolatry*, 88–110.

² Healey, *Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions*; idem, *Religion of the Nabataeans*, passim, but esp. 53–6; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 68–9.

however, and what their functions as such were, is far from clear. A little more clarity will be sought in this chapter.

Perhaps the most common form of sacred space found throughout the ancient and late antique Near East and Arabian Peninsula is the shrine, a built structure which could take the form of a temple, a church, a synagogue, a saint's tomb or much more. Every town, and many smaller settlements, would have possessed at least one of these. Saints' shrines were so prevalent in the late antique Christian world that, as Peter Brown has put it, 'late-antique Christianity, as it impinged on the outside world, was shrines and relics'.³ They were spaces that many people would have encountered every day, but that did not make them any less sacred. Their *raison d'être* was to provide the necessary space for ritual and communal functions, most obviously worship, but also others. At the other end of the spectrum is the interregional holy city, an urban entity whose sanctity was recognised by people over vast geographic areas and which was sometimes visited by those who could afford to undertake the often arduous journey. The most studied example of a late antique holy city is Jerusalem, with its regular pilgrims and its multitude of widely recognised sacred sites, including but by no means limited to Temple Mount and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Between these two extremes lie a number of other forms of sacred space. The Oak of Mamre, near Hebron, provides a concise late antique example of many phenomena generally associated with sacred spaces. The ecclesiastical historian Sozomen (d. after 443 CE) notes that the site, which attracted considerable crowds from Palestine, Phoenicia and (Roman) Arabia during an annual summer feast, had Abrahamic associations – Christians claimed it was where Jesus and two angels appeared before Abraham – but he also explains how the particular dogmas with which it was associated allowed the place to be venerated by members of different faiths:

Indeed this feast is diligently frequented by all nations; by the Jews, because they boast of their descent from the patriarch Abraham; by the Greeks, because angels there appeared to men; and by Christians, because He who, for the salvation of mankind, was born of a virgin, there manifested himself to a godly man.⁴

Sozomen also explains how during the annual feast, 'both buyers and sellers, resort thither on account of the fair'. The ecumenical nature of the site, however, did not last long after the emperor Constantine's

³ Brown, *Cult of Saints*, 12.

⁴ Sozomen, *Ecc. Hist.*, II.4.

(c. 306–37 CE) conversion to Christianity and the transfer of the centre of the empire to Constantinople. When Constantine heard from his mother-in-law that the site was being ‘defiled’ by the libations and sacrifices that some visitors offered there, he instructed the bishops of Palestine to erect a church on the site, forbade libations and sacrifices, and declared: ‘[T]his site should be both kept clear of every defilement and restored to its ancient holy state, so that no other activity goes on there except the performance of the cult appropriate to God the Almighty.’⁵ At Mamre, therefore, a number of the features of sacred spaces can be observed: a site based around a natural feature (here an oak); the close link between pilgrimage and trade; a site which, for a time at least, could be appreciated by adherents of different faiths who held varied beliefs concerning the hierophany that had supposedly occurred there; a site previously frequented by members of various faiths eventually appropriated by a newer faith; the imposition of boundaries (in this case through the construction of a church) and regulations to protect the site from those things considered definitively unholy.

THE HĪJĀZ

If places such as Mamre provide historians with a window into late antique practices of sacred space north of the HĪjāz, such matters remain more obscure within the HĪjāz itself. The pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula is no longer the historical black hole that it used to be. A relatively decent amount of work on the widespread extant epigraphy and archaeology of pre-Islamic South Arabia (modern Yemen, southwest Saudi Arabia and southwest Oman) has greatly increased our understanding of that corner of the peninsula over recent decades, and ancient and early Islamic historians are beginning to take the history of this area much more seriously.⁶ Much of this research has focused on establishing the political history of the various dynasties and kingdoms that ruled in South Arabia, but religious history has also been a prominent theme of research. The unveiling of the spectacularly successful conversion of the Himyarite rulers (who first came to dominate South Arabia over the course of the third century CE) to Judaism in the late fourth century CE has been a particularly

⁵ Eusebius of Caesarea included in his *Life of Constantine* (III.51–3) a copy of the text of the letter Constantine sent outlining his orders regarding the shrine at Mamre to the bishops and civil authorities of Palestine. The quotation here comes from that letter (III.53.4).

⁶ For a very recent example of this trend, see Bowersock, *Throne of Adulis*.

important discovery.⁷ The study of practices of sacred space in South Arabia, especially of the types of shrines (particularly temples of the pre-monotheist period) in the region, has also become relatively advanced. As a result, we know that there were a wide variety of such spaces: temples in the middle of towns, extramural temples, shrines fairly far removed from any urban areas and more; some were pilgrimage destinations, and others were not; some played a role in providing spaces for interaction between settled and (semi-)nomadic populations and others catered more exclusively to particular groups.⁸

The evidence for sacred spaces in the Hijāz, unfortunately, is not nearly as good and so well studied. Because the sciences of archaeology and epigraphy are in their relative infancy in Saudi Arabia, research into the religious practices of western Arabia in the pre-Islamic period has had to rely much more on texts.⁹ The problems famously posed by these texts – they were mostly written in Arabic at least two centuries after the coming of Islam by Muslims whose concerns were frequently far removed from those of the pre- and early Islamic Hijāz; many of the narratives they contain seem to have evolved out of exegesis of obscure verses in the Qurʾān; and they display a disproportionate focus on the Kaʿba and sanctuary at Mecca¹⁰ – have meant that historians have generally had to interpret them by applying models developed during the study of loosely comparable regions with better evidence. Perhaps the best-known effort to apply models developed from the study of another region in another period – in this case, twentieth-century Yemen – to the study of Hijāzī practices of sacred space can be witnessed in two studies by R. B. Serjeant.¹¹ In the most detailed of the two, Serjeant focuses the comparison on the process

⁷ On which see esp. Robin, 'Himyar et Israël'.

⁸ For just a scattered overview of some of the material out there, see Robin and Breton, 'Sanctuaire préislamique'; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 157–62; Sedov, *Temples*. For a recent study which places considerable importance on the social and religious custom of pilgrimage throughout the history of the Arabian Peninsula, see McCorriston, *Pilgrimage and Household*.

⁹ Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*; Fahd, *Panthéon*; Hawting, *Idea of Idolatry*; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 139–66; Crone, 'Religion'; idem, 'Qurānic *mushrikūn*'. For religious practice in pre-Islamic Medina, see esp. Lecker, 'Idol worship'; idem, 'Was Arabian idol worship declining?', 24–37.

¹⁰ A good example of such a later Arabic work is Ibn al-Kalbī's *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, mentioned earlier. Two now classic discussions of the problems involved in using the later Arabic sources for the study of pre-Islamic Arabia are Crone, *Meccan Trade*, esp. 203–30, and Hawting, *Idea of Idolatry*; on the link with Qurānic exegesis, cf. in part Rubin, 'Life of Muḥammad'.

¹¹ Serjeant, 'Haram and hawtah'; idem, 'Ṣan'ā' the protected'.

by which a *hawṭa* – a tribal sacred enclave – is established in twentieth-century Ḥaḍramawt. In the other, he draws on the modern *hijra* – a form of protected space – in Yemen. In both cases, the point of the comparison was to understand how sacred spaces functioned in the pre- and early Islamic Hijāz.

The model Serjeant arrived at based on his study of Ḥaḍramī *hawṭas* is worth outlining in brief. A *hawṭa* is a sacred enclave declared as such by a member of a holy family, and its boundaries are then demarcated by whitewashed cairns; usually they are situated at places where people already tend to congregate for one reason or another (for example, a market). The *hawṭa* must at the same time be recognised by the surrounding tribesmen. When the original founder has passed away, one of his descendants is elected to assume his role, and he takes the title *manṣab*. Within the *hawṭa*, many actions, especially murder, are totally forbidden, but the regulations also cover lesser offences.

Serjeant's methodology and assumptions in these articles have come under some criticism, and it has to be said that, in spite of the interesting and important conclusions that his work has established, some of that criticism is fair.¹² The main problem is that Serjeant states but does not demonstrate his claim that the situation in modern Yemen and Ḥaḍramawt can shed light on that in pre-Islamic Arabia.¹³ He asserts that the modern *hawṭas* and *hijras* he investigated are both continuations of pre-Islamic practices of sacred space but offered no evidence for this. In fact, neither the term *hawṭa* nor the term *hijra*, used to denote a form of protected or sacred space, can be demonstrated to have existed anywhere in pre-Islamic Arabia.¹⁴ Even if they did, we should remember Marc Bloch's warning that: '[T]o the great despair of historians, men fail to change their vocabulary every time they change their customs.'¹⁵ Furthermore, something of a disconnect arises between Serjeant's assumption that hypothetical Arabia-wide practices can be extrapolated from observed Ḥaḍramī customs and the testimony of other observers who have noted the lack of anything similar to the Ḥaḍramī *hawṭa* model elsewhere in the peninsula. In contrast to Serjeant's picture of a Ḥaḍramawt full of

¹² For example, Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 184, n. 81; idem, 'Serjeant and Meccan trade'; Décobert, *Mendiant*, 355–61.

¹³ See, for example, Serjeant, 'Haram and hawṭah', 41–2.

¹⁴ For the argument that the *hijra* institution has its origins in medieval Zaydī Yemen, see Madelung, 'Origins'. The root *h-w-ṭ* is rather tellingly absent from Beeston et al., *Sabaic Dictionary*, and Biella, *Dictionary*.

¹⁵ Bloch, *Historian's Craft*, 34.

manşabs and *hawtaş*, the early twentieth-century Czech traveller Alois Musil bluntly observed of the inhabitants of Najd: 'The camel breeders know no holy places, no sacred objects, no intermediaries between man and Allāh, no forms of prayer.'¹⁶

None of this means that practices similar to the Ḥaḍramī *hawṭa* and Yemeni *hijra* did not exist in pre-Islamic South Arabia, or even in the pre-Islamic Ḥijāz; it simply means that we need to see if any contemporary evidence exists suggesting that the models constructed by the study of such twentieth-century protected spaces are appropriate for understanding the practices of sacred space in the Ḥijāz around the time of Muḥammad's career. As essential as they are for our task, models can only take us so far. Eventually we will have to remain within the bounds of what our primary evidence will allow, even if those bounds are rather limited.

So what primary evidence is there for religious practices and customs in pre-Islamic Arabia? One possibility is offered by Arabic poetry, much of which is said to date back to the pre- and very early Islamic periods, although it only survives in compilations from the second/eighth century and later. Precisely how much is hotly debated, but it seems reasonable to accept that a great deal of this poetry can take us back significantly earlier than most Arabic prose sources. There is also the Qur'ān. Perhaps even more so than with poetry, the controversy over the date of the Qur'ān's composition continues to rage, but, suffice it to say, the Qur'ān as we have it increasingly appears to represent a collection of material that was almost certainly circulating in the early or mid first-/seventh-century Ḥijāz. When precisely that material was collected is where much of the controversy persists.¹⁷ Although the Qur'ān is an early source, however, it is famously obscure and provides little context itself. It is for this reason that most modern research tends to be aimed at using other sources to find an appropriate historical context in which to situate the Quranic text, rather than at using the Qur'ān as a historical source for the environment in which its material was produced.¹⁸

¹⁶ Musil, *Northern Negd*, 257.

¹⁷ On the Quranic material as early first-/seventh-century Ḥijāzī, see esp. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 35–63. Recent arguments for a fairly early collection date, based on manuscript evidence, can be found in Déroche, *Transmission écrite*, and Sadeghi and Bergmann, 'Codex of a Companion'. Much more modern scholarship on the question is surveyed in Shoemaker, *Death of a Prophet*, 136–58.

¹⁸ Three excellent collections of recent research on the historical context of the Qur'ān are Reynolds, ed., *Qur'ān in Its Historical Context*; idem, ed., *New Perspectives*; Neuwirth et al., eds., *Qur'ān in Context*.

Incontrovertible contemporary sources include the numerous pre-Islamic inscriptions from the Arabian Peninsula, although these have many problems of their own. One problem is the regional variation in the quantity and type of the inscriptions: South Arabia has many more monumental and votive texts, for example, than elsewhere.¹⁹ The Ḥijāz has unfortunately provided relatively few published pre-Islamic inscriptions, although this situation is starting to change and there are important exceptions, such as the Nabataean tomb inscriptions of al-Ḥijr/Madā'in Šālīḥ.²⁰ Other more general hindrances include the wide variety of languages and scripts in which they are written and the complications involved in dating most of them.²¹ In spite of all this, however, these inscriptions provide us with our only indisputably pre-Islamic Arabian evidence. There were contemporary observers of pre-Islamic Arabia from outside of the peninsula, most importantly those writing in Greek and Syriac, but their testimonies are not nearly as useful as the inscriptions. Contemporary though they may be, that hardly makes up for their frequent lack of insider knowledge about the Arabians and their land, as well as the generally stereotyped nature of their writings on the subject. They can be of great use, but usually only when carefully correlated with other material.

John Healey opened his book on the Nabataeans' religion with the sensible assertion that the task he had set himself 'necessarily involves an element of imaginative reconstruction, based on the surviving evidence but informed by analogy.'²² The task here will also involve imaginative reconstruction informed by analogy. The case is actually little better for much pre- and early Islamic history in the Ḥijāz and elsewhere; as Chase Robinson has suggested in an article on modern historiography of the early Islamic period in general, 'As long as our evidence remains so weak, the models we choose to apply will exert disproportionate power on our explanations.'²³ This being the case, we should be careful to choose good models for analogy.

¹⁹ An indispensable tool for the study of the South Arabian inscriptions is Kitchen, *Documentation*.

²⁰ Healey, *Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions*. For other pre-Islamic inscriptions found within the peninsula outside of Yemen, see, for example, Hoyland, 'Epigraphy'.

²¹ Macdonald, 'Reflections'; Ryckmans, 'Inscriptions anciennes'.

²² Healey, *Religion of the Nabataeans*, xi; also 6–9.

²³ Robinson, 'Reconstructing early Islam', 131. Wansbrough has made this point specifically regarding pre- and early Islamic Arabia in his *Res Ipsa Loquitur*; also Montgomery, 'Empty Ḥijāz', 42–58, 75–6.

a) The Various Types of Protected Enclaves

It is clear that the pre-Islamic Ḥijāz knew of protected enclaves.²⁴ We must use the term 'protected enclaves' rather than the term 'sacred spaces' at times because it is not actually clear that some of the forms of space discussed here were distinctly sacred. The label 'sacred' should not be used for any of these unless it can be justified. In many respects, the types of sacred space (and here I do mean to use that term) in the pre-Islamic Ḥijāz were presumably similar to those of the lands to the north. The later Arabic sources tell us about a number of shrines (often referred to by the Arabic word *bayt*, but also by other terms, including *ka'ba*) in the Ḥijāz associated with polytheistic worship, but also about the presence of Christians and Jews with their own places of worship. These same sources also assumed the remote sanctuaries at Mecca – overseen by the tribe of Quraysh from the time of Quṣayy b Kilāb (probably the late fourth or early fifth century CE) onwards – and its hinterland (especially at Minā and 'Arafāt) to have commanded a considerable degree of interregional devotion and to have attracted many pilgrims from the surrounding tribes for the annual *hajj* and *'umra* rites in the months of Dhū al-Ḥijja and Rajab respectively.²⁵ This prominence afforded to pre-Islamic Mecca, however, has no contemporary corroboration, and such a picture has been convincingly challenged.²⁶

Those sources which, as discussed earlier, constitute our best approximation of primary evidence for the history of religious customs and practices in the late antique Ḥijāz demonstrate that alongside individual shrines (the *bayts* and *ka'bas*) there were at least two significant practices of enclosing and protecting space which covered significantly larger spaces than individual structures, known by the terms *haram* and *himā*. Similar spaces denoted by terms derived from the same roots, *ḥ-r-m* and *ḥ-m-y*, from other areas of the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula are also known. The remainder of this chapter focuses in particular on these two

²⁴ See, for example, Lammens, 'Sanctuaires préislamites'; Chelhod, *Structures de sacré*, esp. 209–37; Décobert, *Mendiant*, esp. 60–3, 149–91, 255–306, 330–7, 355–61 (although cf. the response to this book in Cheikh-Moussa and Gazagnadou, 'Comment on écrit'; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 157–62).

²⁵ For a general overview, see Peters, *Hajj*, 3–59. It is worth emphasising that the pre-Islamic *hajj* and *'umra* rites were not precisely the same as the Islamic-era pilgrimages that share their names; see Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 68–84.

²⁶ Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 161–99; Kister, 'Some reports concerning Mecca', 70–1. See also the references in note 69.

practices and what they tell us about attitudes towards sacred space in the Hijāz around the time of Muḥammad's career.

i) *Ḥaram*

In later Islamic times, the *ḥaram* came to be one of the most sacred forms of space on earth. Many of those Muslim scholars whose opinions are known appear to have accepted the existence of two genuine Islamic *ḥarams*, at Mecca and Medina, although we will see that other opinions existed as well. Discussions about these *ḥarams* abound in pre-modern Arabic literature, from which it appears that the classical Islamic *ḥaram* was a form of sacred space associated with God and one or more of His prophets with defined boundaries in which certain prohibitions were active that were not active anywhere else. There were also, particularly for Mecca, special boundary rituals that had to be undergone in order to enter the *ḥaram*. We can get a better view of what these prohibitions might have been by looking at the traditions in the local histories of Mecca and Medina which explain the rules. Some of these are discussed in more detail in this and the following two chapters, including, among many others, the more commonly encountered special prohibitions: for example, hunting, cutting down plants, carrying weapons and fighting or killing. These regulations are only applicable within a defined area, and the resulting confusion over the precise boundaries of the relevant areas is another matter that later sources discussed at some length.²⁷ For the time being, it suffices to note that the *ḥarams* at Mecca and Medina were very extensive, extending at least several miles in all directions. The regulations of these *ḥarams* had to be adhered to at all times. Further regulations applied at Mecca during the *ḥajj* season and for anyone undertaking the *ʿumra*, but the basic *ḥaram* regulations of both Mecca and Medina were to be obeyed at all times of the year.

In spite of the attempts of a significant number of Muslim scholars to restrict the number of acceptable *ḥarams* to one or two – Mecca with or without Medina – others were discussed from time to time. Wajj, near al-Ṭāʾif, is occasionally discussed as a *ḥaram*, and by the fourth/tenth century some scholars were arguing that *ḥarams* existed elsewhere.²⁸ Some

²⁷ For example, al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafāʾ*, 1, 194–213; al-Fāsī, *Shifāʾ al-gharām*, 1, 85–105.

²⁸ For Wajj in early Arabic sources, see Abū ʿUbayd, *Amwāl*, 204–8; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1, 284–5; Ibn Hishām, *Sira*, IV, 187; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, 315; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 11, 361–2 (*Kitāb al-Manāsik*, bāb 93). See also Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen*

of the Shī'a came to claim *ḥaram* status for Kufa and Karbala in Iraq, the burial sites of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and his son al-Ḥusayn respectively,²⁹ and by the fourth/tenth century some sources referred to the tomb of Abraham in Hebron in Palestine (not far from the Oak of Mamre) as a *ḥaram*.³⁰ By the sixth/twelfth century, and perhaps no earlier, Jerusalem had come to possess an area known as *al-ḥaram al-sharīf*, 'the noble *ḥaram*'.³¹ These '*ḥarams*' at Kufa, Karbala, Hebron and Jerusalem are not wide, expansive areas like the *ḥarams* at Mecca and Medina, but rather much smaller enclosed structures, or shrines. This usage of the term represents a later development, and it is now also quite common to see discussions of Mecca's and Medina's *ḥarams* that refer solely to the mosques in the centre of the two towns.³² This does not, however, seem to be an accurate reflection of what a *ḥaram* was on the eve of Islam.

In early Arabic poetry, the words from the root *ḥ-r-m* most frequently imply a sense of 'being forbidden', often in apposition to the root *ḥ-l-l*, or 'to withhold' or 'being deprived'.³³ The root certainly carries stronger connotations than simply 'forbidden' and implies something forbidden by ritual or religious custom. Notably, however, it can be used for both 'bad' and 'good' things. The adjective *ḥarām* occasionally appears in contexts where a translation of 'sacred' seems more appropriate than 'forbidden'. Usually in poetry this extended meaning seems clearest when *ḥarām* is used as an adjective qualifying 'months' – many modern scholars indeed regularly translate *al-shahr al-ḥarām* as 'the sacred month' – and perhaps

Heidentums, 29–34; Lammens, 'Cité arabe', 139–41, 144; Kister, 'Some reports concerning al-Ṭā'if'; and Décobert, *Mendiant*, 176–9, 186–90.

²⁹ For Kufa, see al-Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, iv, 563; further references in Friedmann, 'Kūfa is better', 214, 216, 228–9; for Karbala, see al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Mazār*, 120, 123–5; and for both, see al-Ḥusaynī, *Istibṣār*, ii, 334–6.

³⁰ Elad, 'Pilgrims and pilgrimage'.

³¹ Many historians rather misleadingly use the term *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* to refer to Jerusalem's Temple Mount for all periods of Islamic history. However, in Kaplony's comprehensive discussion of the names used to refer to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in the period up to 1099 CE, the term *ḥaram* does not appear at all; see Kaplony, *Haram of Jerusalem*, 214–24, 384–6, 560–3.

³² The use of the word *ḥaram* applied specifically to the Prophet's Mosque in Medina dates back at least as far as the sixth/twelfth century: Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, 199; al-Harawī, *Ishārāt*, 244–7.

³³ For examples of the sense of 'being forbidden', see Arazī and Masalha, *al-'Iqd al-thamīn*, 57, 59; *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, i, 5, 46; *Mu'allaqāt*, 12. For examples of the sense of 'to withhold' and 'being deprived', see *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, i, 779; Arazī and Masalha, *al-'Iqd al-thamīn*, 8, 64. For a discussion of the apposition of *ḥ-r-m* and *ḥ-l-l* in poetry, see Sterkevyč, *Mute Immortals*, esp. 62–3, 70–2. A nice example of this apposition comes in the third line of Labīd's *Mu'allaqā*; see *Mu'allaqāt*, 15.

once as a qualifier for the noun *ḥijr*.³⁴ The word *ḥijr* in this context may refer to another Arabian practice of sacred or protected space.³⁵ In pre-Islamic poetry, examples of the use of the term *ḥaram* to refer to a place emerge – for example, in a verse credited to Ṭarafa b. al-ʿAbd (active perhaps in the mid sixth century CE) – although there is not enough context to suggest a firm meaning or any particular location:

We restrain the ignorant (*al-jāhil*) in our place of counsel (*majlis*), and you see that the *majlis* is held among us like the *ḥaram*.³⁶

The word *ḥirmī*, or *ḥirmiyya*, does occur more frequently, and could perhaps be translated as ‘something/someone from the/a *ḥaram*’.³⁷

Words derived from the root *ḥ-r-m* occur eighty-three times in the Qurʾān, with many of the same meanings as they possess in poetry, although many more occasions occur when a sense of ‘sacred’, beyond merely ‘forbidden’, seems more clearly appropriate.³⁸ A good example of this is the phrase *ḥurumāt Allāh* (Q22.30), which can be understood as ‘God’s sacred things’.³⁹ As in poetry, the root is often used in apposition to *ḥ-l-l*, and there are also occasions when the root *ḥ-r-m* in the Qurʾān refers to declarations of sanctity and forbidding of things that are impure or rejected by God. A good example of this can be found in Q2.173: ‘He has only forbidden for you (*innamā ḥarrama ʿalaykum*) carrion, blood, pig’s meat, and whatsoever has been dedicated to someone other than God.’ It is the basic sense of ‘forbidden’, either totally or unless certain rites and regulations are complied with, that unites these otherwise disparate usages.⁴⁰ On several occasions, later exegetes interpreted words derived from the root *ḥ-r-m* as referring to the practice of *ihṛām* (entering the correct ritual state for the pilgrimage to Mecca), but

³⁴ *Muʿallaqāt*, 15; Arazī and Masalha, *al-ʿIqd al-thamīn*, 18; Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-Qurʾān*, 1, 207.

³⁵ Compare the usages in Beeston et al., *Sabaic Dictionary*, 67; also al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾriḫ*, 1, 2004.

³⁶ Arazī and Masalha, *al-ʿIqd al-thamīn*, 42.

³⁷ *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 1, 358; Arazī and Masalha, *al-ʿIqd al-thamīn*, 15. For one such translation of *ḥirmiyya*, see *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 11, 132.

³⁸ Abd al-Bāqī, *Muʿjam*, s.v. ‘ḥ-r-m’; Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, 201–4.

³⁹ Another example is Q27.91: ‘I have only been commanded to serve the Lord of this territory who made it sacred (*alladhī ḥarramahā*).’

⁴⁰ See esp. Chelod, *Structures de sacré*, 50–2; Gardet, ‘Notion et sens’; cf. in part Décobert, *Mendiant*, 160. A classic discussion of the division between the ‘propitiously sacred and the unpropitiously sacred’ is Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 301–2, 409–14 (quotation from 413).

because this is a form IV verbal noun and no words taken from form IV of the root appear in the Qur'ān, this may well not be the correct interpretation. The most common word thus interpreted is *ḥurum* (Q5.1; 5.95; 5.96).⁴¹

Specifically concerning space, the word *ḥaram* occurs in the Qur'ān twice, both times qualified by the adjective *āmin*, 'secure, inviolable'. Both uses clearly denote some kind of protected territory and make explicit that God Himself created it:

And they say, 'If we follow the guidance with you, we will be snatched away from our land'. But did We not establish for them a *ḥaram āmin* to which the fruits of everything are gathered as sustenance from Us, although most of them do not know [it]? (Q28.57)

But did they not consider that We have made [for them] a *ḥaram āmin* while the people around them are snatched away? (Q29.67)

The adjective *ḥarām* occurs twenty-five times, almost always as a qualifying adjective of *shahr*, 'month', *masjid*, 'place of prostration/worship', *mash'ar*, 'waymark' (?) and *bayt*, 'house' or 'temple'. This adjective is often connected with purity, and is sometimes explicitly connected to God.⁴² The word *ḥarām* appears in one verse (Q21.95) in which its meaning is rather unclear, and this has caused problems for pre-modern Muslim exegetes and modern scholars; it is certainly, however, connected to the delimitation of a particular space as sacred or forbidden.⁴³

The Qur'ān provides enough evidence that the concept of space made inviolable by a deity and considered sacred existed in the Ḥijāz in the early seventh century CE, and that such space could be meaningfully denoted by the noun *ḥaram* and described by the adjective *ḥarām*. That there were other sacred spaces denoted by terms from the root *ḥ-r-m* in pre-Islamic Arabia will be discussed shortly, but it is important that the Qur'ān seems to recognise only one *ḥaram*, one *masjid ḥarām*, one *bayt ḥarām* and one *mash'ar ḥarām*, associated with God and no other deity. This does not mean that the existence of others was not assumed, but for whatever reason the Qur'ān does not mention them. Whether these were

⁴¹ For the commentators' gloss of *ḥurum* as 'whilst in *iḥrām*', see, for example, the commentaries of Q5.96 in: Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I, 506; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, v, 71.

⁴² For example, Q9.29.

⁴³ Discussion in Rippin, 'Qur'an 21:95'. The Arabic text of the verse is: *wa-ḥarām 'alā qarya ahlaknāhā annahum lā yarji'ūna*, which Rippin translates (at 53) as: 'A city, which we destroyed, has been devoted to God, (resulting in the fact) that they may not return (to it).'

all in the same place is difficult to confirm, but that is certainly a plausible reading of the text.

The pre-Islamic Arabian inscriptions also employ the root *ḥ-r-m* to provide terms for types of sanctity. Such terms are attested in inscriptions from both North and South Arabia, and even in some from the Ḥijāz (at al-Ḥijr/Madā'in Ṣāliḥ). Words derived from this root appear frequently in inscriptions denoting some kind of sacred space, often linked to a deity; the most common such word in South Arabia is *mḥrm*.⁴⁴ Often this term seems to indicate something like a temple, but Serjeant has suggested that it also refers on occasion to the wider sacred space in which a temple stands.⁴⁵ This usage of the root apparently disappeared in South Arabia after the beginning of the official promotion of monotheism in that region in the late fourth century CE, but there is no reason this would have affected the practices it denoted in the Ḥijāz.⁴⁶ We may conclude that throughout pre-Islamic Arabia, words derived from the root *ḥ-r-m* appear to have been in use to describe sacred spaces, often connected with a named deity. The specific word *ḥaram* was known in the Qur'ān, and was perhaps the usual term for such territory in the Ḥijāz.⁴⁷

ii) Ḥimā

For most Muslims who have left opinions on the matter, the word *ḥimā* seems to have denoted a rather different type of space to a *ḥaram*, one best described as 'protected' rather than 'sacred'. A *ḥimā* was a form of interdicted pastureland, in which grazing rights for animals were regulated in various ways and for various reasons, and the animals within could be protected from seizure.⁴⁸ Muḥammad is said to have granted *ḥimās* to certain groups on their conversion to Islam, for example the people of

⁴⁴ For example, Beeston et al., *Sabaic Dictionary*, 70–1, and Biella, *Dictionary*, 189–90; Healey, *Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions*, 68, 166 (nos. 1 and 19).

⁴⁵ Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt*, 77.

⁴⁶ This root is among those Christian Robin lists as used for types of sacred space in polytheist but not in monotheist South Arabia; see his 'Judaïsme de Ḥimyar', 121–4.

⁴⁷ It is also worth noting that the term *ḥaram* appears five times (as ὁραμ) among the relatively large number of Arabic loanwords that appear in the otherwise Greek early-to-mid sixth-century CE Petra papyrus inv. no. 10. Unfortunately, this text remains unpublished; a preliminary study, however, has shown that on all five occasions the word appears as part of a toponym, three times to denote an area belonging to certain tribes, once to denote the 'ḥaram of the well', and once without further detail; see al-Ghul, 'Preliminary study', 141, 145.

⁴⁸ For example, al-Khalīl (attrib.), 'Ayn, III, 312; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, xv, 9–10, 11–12; xviii, 217; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, II, 343–5; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, IV, 71.

Jurash (between Mecca and Najrān),⁴⁹ and both the Prophet and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb reportedly created *himās* near Medina for the grazing of horses to be used in raids and camels given as charitable donations.⁵⁰ There was always some debate over the precise meaning of the term in lexical and legal sources, which we need not go into here. One fairly common definition can be seen, for example, in the mid-to-late second-/eighth-century *Kitāb al-'Ayn*:

A place in which there is fresh herbage, which is protected against people pasturing [there] (*mawḍi' fihī kala' yuḥmā min al-nās an yar'ā*).⁵¹

Like many lexicons, the *Kitāb al-'Ayn* should perhaps be read as prescriptive rather than descriptive, but for us here that does not really matter; medieval Muslim scholars clearly distinguished between *haram* and *himā*. Modern scholars, however, debate whether the two terms were synonymous in pre-Islamic Arabia, although few have provided much evidence either way.⁵² I will argue here through the little primary evidence available that the classical distinction between the two terms probably reflects their distinct usages in pre-Islamic Arabia.

In pre- and early Islamic poetry, words derived from the root *ḥ-m-y* most regularly imply defence or protection, or, in form VI, staying away from something.⁵³ There are clear occurrences in poetry of the term *himā* being used in a technical, spatial sense.⁵⁴ It is a common trope in early Arabic poetry (even into the Umayyad era) for a poet to proclaim the glory of his own tribe at the expense of others by noting that his tribe

⁴⁹ Ibn Hishām, *Sira*, iv, 234; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, i, 1730–1.

⁵⁰ See the accounts of these in al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, iv, 71–103; for discussion, see Décobert, *Mendiant*, 193–4, 239–40, 267–75. On some *himās* to the south and southeast of Medina, see Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, 229–38.

⁵¹ Al-Khalil (attrib.), *'Ayn*, iii, 312.

⁵² For the suggestion that the two terms could mean essentially the same thing, see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, i, 215; Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 105–9; Healey, *Religion of the Nabataeans*, 77–8; Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 201. For the argument that they denoted, originally at least, different forms of space, see Lammens, *Berceau de l'Islam*, 60–5; Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation*, 25–7; Chelhod, *Structures de sacré*, 42, 231–2, 237; and Serjeant, 'Haram and hawtah', 43. In one of the fullest discussions of the question, Décobert has considered *himās* sacred spaces ('aires sacrées'), but sometimes distinct from *harams* in certain important ways, including that they need not be physically connected to a deity's sanctuary and never seem to have been inhabited by stable populations; see Décobert, *Mendiant*, esp. 166–74, 179–80, 186; cf., however, the important response in Cheikh-Moussa and Gazagnadou, 'Comment on écrit', 204–9.

⁵³ *Mu'allaqāt*, 8, 19, 22.

⁵⁴ Among many examples, Azazi and Masalha, *al-'Iqd al-thamīn*, 66, 94; Abū 'Ubayda, *Naqā'id*, i, 300, 539; ii, 649; Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, xxii, 84.

could protect its *ḥimās* whereas its rivals could not. One verse, for example, attributed both to Zayd b. 'Amr al-Aḥwaṣ, who was alive during the reign of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (r. 23–35/644–56), and to one Shurayḥ b. al-Ḥārith al-Yarbū'ī, about whom little is otherwise known, proclaims:

We pasture in the *ḥimā* of people which is not forbidden/inviolable/sacred to us (*ghayr muḥarram 'alaynā*), but the *ḥimā* which we created is not used for pasture.⁵⁵

These verses do not tell us much about what a *ḥimā* is, but they do suggest that it was at least a space of protected pastureland, and they demonstrate that it was a matter of tribal pride to protect one's own *ḥimā* whilst defiling those of one's enemies.⁵⁶ At least one of these verses also implies a link between *ḥimās* and the keeping of horses, which, incidentally, is the picture we often get from later Islamic sources, especially concerning the early Islamic *ḥimās* near Medina and the pre-Islamic *ḥimās* of the Ghassanids, Lakhmids and Kinda.⁵⁷

The Qur'ān uses the root *ḥ-m-y* in an almost entirely different way to the poetry, but still does not provide any evidence for *ḥimā* being a synonym of *ḥaram* in the pre-Islamic Hijāz. The root *ḥ-m-y* appears only six times in the Qur'ān and the word *ḥimā* never appears.⁵⁸ In five of these, the intended meaning is to do with 'heatedness' or 'zealotry'; on the other occasion (Q5.103), the word *ḥāmī* refers to one of the four types of prohibited cattle. (Could it refer to cattle pasturing within a *ḥimā*?) The root *ḥ-m-y* denoting space does not appear as frequently in the pre-Islamic inscriptions as the root *ḥ-r-m*, and seemingly only in inscriptions from South Arabia, where words from the root used with a spatial sense seem to mean irrigated or embanked land.⁵⁹ One inscription which has appeared only recently suggests that a term from the root (*ḥmit*) may have been used for restricted pastureland.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Abū 'Ubayda, *Naqā'id*, I, 300.

⁵⁶ See also Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation*, 20–1, 216, nn. 48–50; Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, 47; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 222.

⁵⁷ Abū 'Ubayda, *Naqā'id*, II, 649. For the early Islamic *ḥimās* near Medina, see note 50. For the *ḥimās* of the pre-Islamic kings, see *BASIC*, II/I, 57–60; *EP*, s.v. 'Khayl' (F. Viré). Interestingly, in a supposedly early Kharijite view of history, a major complaint about 'Uthmān b. 'Affān's rule is that he created *ḥimās*; see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 516. Perhaps he followed the practice of pre-Islamic rulers.

⁵⁸ 'Abd al-Bāqī, *Mu'jam*, s.v. 'ḥ-m-y'; Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, 238.

⁵⁹ Beeston et al., *Sabaic Dictionary*, 69; Biella, *Dictionary*, 179–80. For discussion of the fact that it does not appear in Nabataean areas, see Healey, *Religion of the Nabataeans*, 77.

⁶⁰ Frantsouzzoff, 'Status of sacred pastures', 159.

Not all pre-Islamic *himās*, then, were merely *harams* under another name. It makes more sense to accept that the primary function of a pre-Islamic Hijāzī *himā* was to provide secure grazing for a certain group of animals, as it was for an Islamic *himā*, and that some *himās*, although not all of them, could be attached to a deity's sacred space, the animals within that space protected by that deity and at times reserved for his/her specific use.⁶¹ Henri Lammens and Frede Løkkegaard have both suggested that a *haram* may have been the inner, sacred part of a deity's sanctuary, which was surrounded by a *himā*, in which cattle 'owned by' the deity could graze.⁶² The god of the temple at Maḥram Bilqīs in South Arabia, Almaḡah, certainly had his own cultivated land;⁶³ in an area such as the Hijāz, where cultivable land was less common than in South Arabia, deities could more frequently have possessed pasturelands instead. This argument is attractive, and although no sources indicate explicitly that this was certainly the case, it would be a sensible way of interpreting some of the evidence.

Ultimately, we simply do not have a decent, reliable report of a pre-Islamic Arabian *himā*. Like a *haram*, a *himā* was clearly a form of demarcated, protected space, and the two certainly seem to have shared some important social and economic functions. However, the terms *haram* and *himā* denoted fundamentally different usages of space in Islamic Arabia, and there is no evidence to suggest that they did not in the pre-Islamic period. Serjeant's distinction between a 'sacred enclave' attached to the worship of a deity (*haram*) and 'interdicted pasture' for cattle (*himā*) seems reasonable.⁶⁴ *Himās* were occasionally attached to a deity, and only in these instances could they possibly be considered sacred spaces.

b) The Pre-Islamic *haram*

Hijāzī *himās* may not always have been sacred spaces, but that a practice of sanctifying space known as a *haram* existed in the region of the western

⁶¹ See also Serjeant, 'Professor A. Guillaume's translation', 6; Décobert, *Mendiant*, 167, 171. For examples of *himās* attached to deities, see Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 51–6, 107; Fahd, *Panthéon*, 75–7, 84–7; Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation*, 25–6.

⁶² Lammens, *Berceau de l'Islam*, 61–2; Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation*, 25–7, 29. Chelhod has also suggested that some Arabian sacred spaces consisted of up to three concentric areas of unequal sanctity; see his *Structures de sacré*, 229. Such is how Muslim scholars describe Mecca – Ka'ba, 'sacred mosque' (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*), and *haram* – but of course in this case the broadest zone is called a *haram*, not a *himā*.

⁶³ Maraqtan, 'Legal documents', 54.

⁶⁴ Serjeant, 'Haram and hawtah', 43.

Arabian Peninsula around Mecca and Medina in late antiquity – particularly at the time of Muḥammad's career – seems an agreeable conclusion. Can we learn anything more about them, such as how many there were, how they functioned and how they were created?

i) *The Number of ḥarams*

Although the Qur'ān seems to speak of one *ḥaram*, made secure by God, evidence suggests that other *ḥarams* existed in the pre-Islamic Ḥijāz. The Islamic sources themselves recognise the existence of several *ḥarams* in pre-Islamic Arabia; for the Ḥijāz, aside from Quraysh's *ḥaram* at Mecca, some Muslim scholars also placed *ḥarams* at Wajj and Buss, associated with the tribes of Thaḳīf and Ghatafān respectively.⁶⁵ Just as for Mecca, there is no contemporary evidence to affirm the existence of pre-Islamic *ḥarams* at Wajj and Buss, but their existence is perfectly plausible. These reports are not in any obvious way connected to later Quranic exegesis, and those about Buss are not even connected to the biography of the Prophet, at least as they have come down to us.⁶⁶ Many of the reports about the Thaḳāfi *ḥaram* at Wajj do come from the supposed text of a letter/letters by Muḥammad to the Thaḳāfis of al-Ṭā'if, and the authenticity of these letters is, of course, questionable. In some of the relevant letters to Thaḳīf, however, the Prophet allows Wajj to remain a *ḥaram*, and because a significant number of Muslim scholars later questioned its status as such, there is some reason to see those reports reflecting the early recognition of a *ḥaram* there as essentially accurate. Other versions of Muḥammad's correspondence with Thaḳīf either neglect to mention the status of Wajj,⁶⁷ or state that it was a *ḥimā*, not a *ḥaram*.⁶⁸ In spite of the lack of confirmation from primary sources, it is hard to envisage a scenario in which Wajj was at first considered a *ḥimā*, or to have no form of protected space at all, and was later upgraded by some commentators to possess a *ḥaram*.

Mecca, even if it were the location of the Quranic *ḥaram*, was thus almost certainly not the only *ḥaram* in the late antique Ḥijāz.⁶⁹ We are told

⁶⁵ For Wajj, see note 28. The *ḥaram* at Buss is discussed further later in this chapter.

⁶⁶ Hawting has suggested that the stories about Buss are connected to later polemical attempts to explain the existence of idolatry in Arabia after Abraham had brought monotheism there; see his review of Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*. This suggestion is plausible for many accounts, but not the one discussed later in this chapter.

⁶⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, i, 1687–92.

⁶⁸ Al-Wāqidi, *Maghāzī*, iii, 973; see also Serjeant, 'Haram and hawtah', 52.

⁶⁹ For reasonable if by no means conclusive doubts about the location of the Quranic sanctuary in Mecca, see, for example, Hawting, 'Origins'; idem, 'al-Hudaybiyya'; Crone, 'How did the Quranic pagans make a living?', esp. 391–5. Although the doubts Hawting

of at least two more, at Buss and Wajj, and there may have been others. Ibn al-Kalbī, in his *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, and other early Islamic scholars refer to a number of shrines – the usual word is *bayt*, although *masjid* and *ka'ba* are also sometimes used – connected with other deities.⁷⁰ It is far from clear that many of these ever actually existed, but some may have, and may even have had *ḥarams*. Patricia Crone has suggested that the famous pre-Islamic fairs in the Ḥijāz – 'Ukāz, Dhū al-Majāz, and Majanna – may have been *ḥarams* of their own as well.⁷¹ This is a possibility, especially for 'Ukāz. Arabic sources certainly suggest that all three sites were part of annual pilgrimage rites. We are also told that 'Ukāz was the location of an idol called Jihār and that it possessed both stones which people circumambulated and 'anṣāb'; this word (sing. *nuṣub*) is used as the term for the boundary stones demarcating Mecca's *ḥaram*.⁷² Explicit attestation of a *ḥaram* at any of these sites, however, is extremely rare.⁷³

ii) The Rules of a ḥaram

There is no extant list of the rules of a pre-Islamic *ḥaram*; what follows should merely be treated as an exercise, in which I have drawn principally on the regulations included in Quranic verses which mention a *ḥaram* or *al-masjid al-ḥarām*, supported where possible by comparison with pre-Islamic sources for other sacred spaces in the Arabian Peninsula.⁷⁴ I will also note where the same rules are provided in the earliest Arabic local histories of Mecca (from the third/ninth century) for the *ḥaram* there. According to these sources, Muḥammad (re-)affirmed most of the rules for Mecca's *ḥaram*, and outlined the exceptions, in a sermon (*khutba*) after the city fell to the Muslims.⁷⁵ Even if these reports are not genuine,

and Crone raised are significant, it is worth bearing in mind that in the one place in the Qur'ān where Mecca is explicitly referred to by name, *al-masjid al-ḥarām* appears in the verse immediately following and the two may therefore be linked (Q48.24–5).

⁷⁰ For other, slightly different lists of pre-Islamic deities and their sanctuaries, see Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 315–19 and Ibn Hishām, *Sira*, I, 78–91.

⁷¹ Crone, *Meccan Trade*, esp. 173.

⁷² Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 315; al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, III, 959; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, III, 705; Fahd, *Panthéon*, 94–5.

⁷³ Crone does offer one reference for 'Ukāz's *ḥaram*, Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, XI, 119: 'He brought [the sword] to the market of 'Ukāz in the *ḥaram* ... Then he struck him with it until he killed him in the *ḥaram*' (*fa-atā bihi sūq 'Ukāz fi al-ḥaram ... fa-'alāhu bihi ḥattā qatalahu fi al-ḥaram*).

⁷⁴ South Arabian inscriptions often mention similar ritual regulations and practices of sacred space to those known from the Qur'ān and Arabic discussions of Mecca; see Ryckmans, 'Inscriptions sud-arabes'; and Robin, 'Filles de Dieu', esp. 157–60.

⁷⁵ Al-Azraqī, *Akhhār Makka*, II, 121–3; al-Fākihī, *Akhhār Makka*, II, 246–50.

they quite possibly represent later efforts to provide Prophetic sanction for the continuation of pre-Islamic practice.

§1 Killing and fighting are banned within a *ḥaram*'s limits (Q2.191; see also 3.97; 5.2). This prohibition is supported by the Meccan local histories, although they note that the Prophet was granted an exception to this rule for a very brief period to allow for the execution of a small number of irreconcilable Meccans.⁷⁶ According to the Roman official Nonnosus, who participated in an embassy on behalf of the emperor Justinian I (r. 527–65 CE) to South Arabia in ca. 530–1 CE, when the 'Saracens' meet twice a year in their sacred site, 'they observe a complete peace, not only towards each other, but also towards all men living in their country.'⁷⁷ South Arabian inscriptions connected to spaces known by the term *mḥrm*, usually here 'temple', also reveal that prohibitions on carrying and using weapons in such spaces were in place.⁷⁸ This prohibition on killing and fighting is closely linked to the necessity of a *ḥaram*'s inviolability (Q28.57; 29.67).⁷⁹ Many traditions in the local histories of Mecca stress the Meccan *ḥaram*'s inviolability; once the *ḥaram* there was even said to have protected someone from God's punishment.⁸⁰

§2 Q2.197 prohibits those undertaking the *ḥajj* from quarrelling (*jidāl*); this was possibly a permanent prohibition within a *ḥaram*.⁸¹ The Meccan local histories do not allow slandering in the *ḥaram* and condemn the raising of one's voice.⁸² Bans on conducting disputes are attested for pre-Islamic South Arabian sanctuaries.⁸³

⁷⁶ Al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 123–5, 127, 133, 136–7; al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 247, 251, 253, 255, 260, 267. According to another passage by al-Azraqī, if someone in pre-Islamic times had killed another in a *ḥaram* out of ignorance, they could avoid retaliation by wearing a garland of bark taken from a tree of the *ḥaram* and exclaiming 'I am a *ṣarūra*'; see his *Akhbār Makka*, I, 192; also discussed in Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 183.

⁷⁷ Cited by Photius (d. ca. 893 CE), *Bibliotheca*, 2b, II. 28–31 (the English translation is from Wilson, 28). This sacred site was associated with the inhabitants of the so-called Palm Grove (*phoimikōn*), with a sacred precinct (*temenos*), somewhere in northwest Arabia, referred to by several Greek authors besides Nonnosus: Strabo, *Geography*, XVI.4.18, 21; Diodorus, *Bib. Hist.*, III.42–3; Procopius, *Wars*, I.19.7–13, II.3.41. Hoyland suggests that this Palm Grove was near Tabūk; see his *Arabia and the Arabs*, 71; also BASIS, I/i, 124–30. Cf. Robin, 'Arabia and Ethiopia', 293, where it is proposed that the term *phoimikōn* indicated 'the great oases of the northern Ḥijāz'. Such a broad understanding seems very unlikely, given the way the sources discuss the site.

⁷⁸ A good example of such a text, albeit one rather removed in time from the late antique Ḥijāz, is CIH 548, from Haram in the Yemeni Jawf and datable to the seventh or sixth century BCE; see Robin, *Inventaire*, 78–81.

⁷⁹ Q105 would also be relevant here, if these verses were genuinely connected to a failed expedition against a sanctuary.

⁸⁰ Al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 132–3; al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 251–2.

⁸¹ Perhaps related to this is Q49.2–4.

⁸² Al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 133, 137; al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 251, 259, 261–2.

⁸³ For example, Ghul, 'Pilgrimage at Itwat', discussing RES 4176, dated to the first century BCE; Nāmi, *Nashr nuqūsh sāmiyya qadima*, 95–100 (no. 74, dated to the third century CE), although cf. the suggested reinterpretation of this inscription in Beeston, 'Notes [iv]',

§3 The *mushrikūn*, loosely 'idolaters', are not allowed to enter because they are unclean (*najas*) (Q9.28). The prohibition on non-Muslims entering Mecca is well known from the Islamic sources.⁸⁴ The restriction on the *mushrikūn* entering a *haram* was perhaps a new Quranic regulation, although it is best understood as the extension of long-held regulations banning ritually impure people (variously defined) from sanctuaries. Similar rules are known from pre-Islamic inscriptions.⁸⁵

§4 A treaty concluded in a *haram* is inviolable (Q9.7). In pre-Islamic Arabia, agreements were often concluded at sanctuaries, witnessed and guaranteed by the deity.⁸⁶

§5 The Qur'ān prohibits hunting whilst the believers are '*ḥurum*' (Q5.1; 5.95; 5.96). The traditional interpretation of this term as 'in *ihram*', specifically while performing the *hajj*, may be too restrictive, and 'while in a *haram*' may be a better alternative.⁸⁷ In any case, it is reasonable to assume that the ban on hunting was permanent within a *haram* and not restricted to certain times of year. The local histories recognise the prohibition on hunting within Mecca's *haram*, and according to the aforementioned Nonnosus, the 'Saracens' claimed that in the sacred spots where they held their biannual gatherings 'wild animals are at peace with man.'⁸⁸ This restriction on hunting connected to Ḥijāzī sacred spaces offers little resemblance to the popularity of ritual hunting attached to sanctuaries and shrines in parts of South Arabia.⁸⁹

§6 Among other regulations which are not found in the Qur'ān, but in the Meccan local histories, one is worth mentioning here. Because there is nothing obviously 'Islamic' about it, it is possible that it was a pre-Islamic regulation. This is the ban on cutting down plants and trees within the *haram*.⁹⁰ In some reports, a particular

142–7. For a possible ban on conjugal arguments, see the two second- or first-century BCE inscriptions discussed in Frantsouzoff, 'Regulation'.

⁸⁴ I have discussed this in more detail in Munt, 'No two religions'.

⁸⁵ Ryckmans, 'Inscriptions sud-arabes', 453–7. Evidence that restrictions were placed on the participation of menstruating women in ritual activities at sacred sites can be seen in the South Arabian inscription CIH 533, from Haram and datable to the second century CE; see Robin, *Inventaire*, 102–3. For a North Arabian (Safaitic) text which possibly outlines ritual purity restrictions placed on those performing a pilgrimage, see Winnett and Harding, *Inscriptions*, 437 (no. 3053).

⁸⁶ Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 159.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, xv, 10: 'A man who enters the *haram* is *ḥarām*.... Some make of this the plural *ḥurum*.'

⁸⁸ Al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār Makka*, II, 121, 126, 140–2; al-Fākihī, *Akhhbār Makka*, II, 246–50; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 2b, ll. 31–2 (trans. Wilson, 28). Hunting is not to be confused here with ritual sacrifices, which frequently took place within sacred spaces; see, for example, Healey, *Religion of the Nabataeans*, 72–3, 161–3; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, 163–6. In the Islamic *hajj*, the sacrifices are made at Minā, which is within the territory of the *haram*.

⁸⁹ Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt*.

⁹⁰ Al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār Makka*, II, 121, 123, 126, 142–4; al-Fākihī, *Akhhbār Makka*, II, 246–50, 267. The supposed founder of Quraysh's power in Mecca, Quṣayy b. Kilāb, reportedly broke this rule; see Ibn Hishām, *Sira*, I, 132.

plant or group of plants is singled out for prohibition, for example acacia trees ('*iqāb*').⁹¹ The cutting down of one plant, a variety of sweet rush called *idhkkhir*, is singled out as an exception to the rule because of its importance to the Meccan way of life.

The economic and social functions of sacred spaces in pre-Islamic Arabia are well established in modern scholarship, and research on the origins of Islam and the position of Quraysh in pre-Islamic Mecca has regularly drawn attention to the connection between trade and *ḥarams*.⁹² It is, therefore, worth noting that there is no indication that trade was restricted in Ḥijāzī *ḥarams*, nor in most other instances of pre-Islamic Arabian sacred space, although Islamic law came to place restrictions on business practices in a *ḥaram*.⁹³ It is finally worth emphasising that many of these rules can be seen as an attempt to establish a *ḥaram* as a space where no person (except perhaps a non-believer) need have any fear concerning his life or property.

iii) *How and Why Might an Area Become a ḥaram?*

As with the issue of *ḥaram* regulations, we have no contemporary theoretical discussion of how a pre-Islamic Ḥijāzī *ḥaram* should be created. Løkkegaard analysed the creation of *ḥimās*, but mostly using Islamic legal sources. According to his discussion, first one had to get to the area of the prospective *ḥimā* before anyone else and then fix its boundaries: 'It is characteristic that in all the methods for drawing the boundaries of the *ḥimā*'s, which are depicted to us, there enters an element of fortuity.' Various methods given include: thrusting a lance in the ground to mark where the *ḥimā* begins and subsequently riding one's horse as far as it will gallop (this providing the opposite limit of the *ḥimā*), and setting the boundaries at the farthest reach of a shout in all directions. Perhaps the most famous method for the creation of a *ḥimā* is that a

⁹¹ Al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 121.

⁹² For general remarks, see Décobert, *Mendiant*; McCorriston, *Pilgrimage and Household*, 28–31, 78–84; for a discussion of the relevant scholarship on Mecca, see Crone, *Meccan Trade*. As Crone points out, however, Quraysh are actually rather unusual in Arabian history in being presented as guardians of a sanctuary who directly participated in trade themselves; see her *Meccan Trade*, 185–6; and 'Serjeant and Meccan trade', 231–4.

⁹³ For example, the Umayyad caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99–101/717–20) is said to have banned the Meccans from letting rooms to pilgrims in return for payment: Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, v, 364; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 43; Abū 'Ubayd, *Amwāl*, 72.

man in pre-Islamic times would make a dog bark and the boundaries of the *himā* would be the reach of the sound of that bark.⁹⁴

So much for the creation of a *himā*; as for a *haram*, the situation at first looks bleak. We have little chance of discovering the circumstances of Mecca's original declaration as a *haram* (Ar. *tahrīm*). For what it is worth, our sources usually stick to the placement of this event in the legendary past: God made it a *haram* either on the day that he created the heavens and the earth or during the lifetime of Adam or Abraham.⁹⁵ The Qur'ān does not elaborate on how its *haram* or *al-masjid al-haram* came to be, other than to suggest that they are God's work. There is no way of discovering the circumstances of Wajj's *tahrīm*, because the sources also do not discuss that at all.⁹⁶ All is not quite lost, however, for Arabic sources provide intriguing evidence on the circumstances surrounding the creation of a *haram* at a place called Buss.

This evidence all comes from Muslim Arabic works, and unfortunately they do not provide a coherent body of opinion on the issue. There are several accounts of the circumstances leading to Buss' *tahrīm*, and although the accounts agree on some points, they also disagree over much.⁹⁷ The exact location of Buss is in doubt.⁹⁸ So is what exactly the term *Buss* represents: some reports have it as a building, another as a water source.⁹⁹ None of the accounts provides a date for the creation

⁹⁴ Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation*, 22–5 (quotation from 22). The use of animals to demarcate protected space is not at all unusual. It is well known that the site of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina was apparently chosen as the place where Muḥammad's camel stopped after his arrival in Medina after the *hijra*, and Mircea Eliade has discussed the use of animals to demarcate sacred space in many cultures; see his *Sacred and the Profane*, 27–8.

⁹⁵ Al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 121–8; al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makka*, II, 248, 274–6.

⁹⁶ Where Muḥammad acknowledges the existence of Wajj's *haram* in his letters to Thaqif, he is reaffirming an already existing sacred space rather than creating one.

⁹⁷ The most important accounts are: Ibn al-Kalbī, *Aṣnām*, 13–21; idem, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 476; Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, XIV, 9; XIX, 15–16; Abū Ṭālib al-Marrākushī, *Tahrīr al-maqāl*, the relevant passage (for which al-Marrākushī's source was a work by Wathīma b. al-Furāt [d. 237/851–2]) ed. and trans. in 'Abbās, 'Two hitherto unpublished texts', 12–14. See also Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 34–9; Fahd, *Panthéon*, 163–7, 203; 'Alī, *Mufaṣṣal*, VI, 240–2, 444–5; Atallah, 'al-Buss'; Kister, 'Mecca and the tribes', 42–52; Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, 37–42.

⁹⁸ Compare Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 37–8 (not in al-Nakhla al-Shāmiyya); Fahd, *Panthéon*, 203 (in al-Nakhla al-Shāmiyya); Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, 39–41 (in *Ḥurāḍ*, in the upper part of al-Nakhla al-Shāmiyya); Hawting, review of Lecker, *Banū Sulaym* (we just do not know, assuming Buss even existed). Al-Nakhla al-Shāmiyya is a *wādī* northeast of Mecca.

⁹⁹ Building: Ibn al-Kalbī, *Aṣnām*, 13; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, ed. al-'Azmi, XII, 54; Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, XIV, 9. Watering spot: Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, XIX, 15–16. For a

of this *ḥaram*, although personalities who feature in some accounts suggest that the events took place in the mid-to-late sixth century CE.¹⁰⁰ Many reports about Buss stress its establishment as a rival sanctuary to Quraysh's Ka'ba at Mecca by Ghaṭafān, led by one Zālim b. As'ad or by Riyāḥ b. Zālim b. As'ad, and subsequently destroyed by Zuhayr b. Janāb of the Banū Kalb;¹⁰¹ some even add that it was built to the exact measurement of the Ka'ba between two stones to represent Mecca's hillocks al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa (between which the *sa'y* is performed during the *ḥajj*), these stones having been taken from those hills. Much of the detail here is suspicious, especially because the later sources often carefully point out that other pre-Islamic sanctuaries were constructed to rival the Ka'ba.¹⁰² For Muslim historians, it may have seemed obvious that anyone creating a new *ḥaram* or sanctuary must have been trying to replicate the Ka'ba, but there is no good reason to believe that this reflects the actual pre-Islamic situation.

There is one account shorn of much of the clearly legendary material, attributed to Ibn al-A'rābī (d. between 230/844–5 and 233/847–8) and preserved by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967):

The reason Zuhayr b. Janāb raided Ghaṭafān was: When the Banū Baghīd [b. Rayth b. Ghaṭafān] were leaving the Tihāma they travelled together, but they were opposed by Ṣudā', a tribe (*qabila*) from Madhḥij. They attacked them while the Banū Baghīd were travelling with their families, women and property. So [the Banū Baghīd] fought to defend their dependents (*fa-qātālū 'an ḥarīmihim*) and were victorious over Ṣudā'; they inflicted much pain and injury upon them. The Banū Baghīd became powerful and wealthy because of that and took much plunder. When they realised that, they said: 'By God! Let us take a *ḥaram* the likes of the Meccan *ḥaram*, in which no game may be killed, no tree may be lopped, and no one who comes to it seeking protection may be perturbed.' The Banū Murra b. 'Awf [b. Sa'd b. Dhubyān b. Baghīd] carried that out. The man in charge of the affair of the *ḥaram* and the demarcation of its boundaries (*binā' ḥā'iṭihī*)¹⁰³

conjectured etymology which ultimately traces the name back to the Greek word *abyssos*, see Atallah, 'al-Buss'.

¹⁰⁰ Though cf. in part 'Abbās, 'Two hitherto unpublished texts', 10.

¹⁰¹ Zuhayr b. Janāb was a famous Kalbī tribal leader. The various reports about his life are often legendary in nature, especially those about the extremely long length of his life. He was apparently a one-time ally of Abraha, the mid sixth-century CE Ethiopian ruler of South Arabia reported to have led an attack on Mecca; see Kister, 'Mecca and the tribes', 44–52; 'Alī, *Mufaṣṣal*, iv, 426–9; *EP*, s.v. 'Zuhayr b. Djanāb' (M. Lecker).

¹⁰² Compare some of the reports about Abraha's church, al-Qalīs/al-Qullays: Ibn al-Kalbī, *Aṣnām*, 39; Ibn Hishām, *Ṣira*, i, 47. Another example is Qawdam/al-Hawrā': Ibn al-Kalbī, *Aṣnām*, 38. Another is the *ka'ba* of Najrān: Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, iv, 756.

¹⁰³ In my translation here, I follow Lammens, 'Sanctuaires préislamites', 115–16, 120, where he notes that in this case *ḥā'it* surely means some form of earthwork, perhaps

was Riyāḥ b. Zālim. They carried that out while they were at a water spot of theirs called Buss. News of their action and what they had resolved upon came to Zuhayr b. Janāb, who was at that time the leader of the Banū Kalb. He said: 'By God, that will never happen while I am alive! I will never leave Ghaṭafān alone while they take a *ḥaram*!' He called out to his people, gathered them to him, stood among them, and recounted the situation of Ghaṭafān and the news concerning them that had come to him, and that it would be the most noble feat for him and his people to resolve to prevent them from doing that and to get in the way of their doing it. They responded positively. He also asked the Banū al-Qayn from Jusham for help, but they refused to participate in his raid. He set off with his people and raided Ghaṭafān. They fought and Zuhayr was victorious and achieved everything he had intended concerning them. He took a rider from them as a prisoner in the *ḥaram* which they had constructed. He said to one of his companions: 'Execute him!' But he replied: 'He is a *basl* [and therefore cannot lawfully be killed]'.¹⁰⁴ Zuhayr replied: 'By your father, no *basl* is forbidden to me!' He came to [the prisoner], decapitated him, and thus declared that *ḥaram* null and void (*wa-'aṭṭala dhālika al-ḥaram*). Then he acted graciously towards Ghaṭafān, returning their women and their cattle.¹⁰⁵

This account has greater claims to preserving some semblance of the historical circumstances surrounding the creation of the *ḥaram* at Buss than the others, although it is worth remembering that the two main tribal groups involved – Ghaṭafān and Kalb – were fierce rivals for much of the Umayyad period, so it is possible that this rivalry was projected back into pre-Islamic Arabia.¹⁰⁶ It at least offers some insight into why a Ḥijāzī tribe might attempt to establish a *ḥaram*. In this case, that reason is, as both M. J. Kister and Iḥsān 'Abbās have suggested, simply an attempt by one tribe to demonstrate its strength and, perhaps more importantly, to stress that it is no longer dependent in any way on another.¹⁰⁷ The Banū Baghīḍ of Ghaṭafān wanted a *ḥaram* only once they began to think that they might be powerful enough to warrant one. As it turns out, they were wrong and their move angered other tribes who were stronger, but this should not cloud the intent. Note that Zuhayr b. Janāb's opposition to Ghaṭafān was, according to this narrative, solely motivated by opposition to the *ḥaram*, presumably because

a trench, and that the verbs *banā* and *ibtanā* are elsewhere used in a sense where they cannot refer to the construction of a building.

¹⁰⁴ The *basl* is usually explained as a pre-Islamic practice of an annual eight-month sacred period (opposed to the Meccan four-month period), during which various tribes agreed not to attack those who moved through their territory; see Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, I, 106–7; Kister, 'Mecca and the tribes', 42.

¹⁰⁵ Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, XIX, 15–16; see also Kister, 'Mecca and the tribes', 44–5.

¹⁰⁶ *EP*, s.v. 'Ghaṭafān' (J. W. Fück).

¹⁰⁷ Kister, 'Mecca and the tribes', 44; 'Abbās, 'Two hitherto unpublished texts', 9.

its establishment implied Ghaṭafānī superiority over his own group, the Banū Kalb.¹⁰⁸ When Zuhayr and his allies defeated Ghaṭafān, he was most concerned with proving the *ḥaram* void, not with taking plunder. This report does not mention that Buss' *ḥaram* was connected to a specific deity, but we should perhaps expect it to have been: Buss, Ghaṭafān and Zālim b. As'ad are elsewhere associated with the Arabian goddess al-'Uzzā.¹⁰⁹

From the foregoing discussion, a plausible model can be suggested for why a pre-Islamic Hījāzī tribe might wish to establish a *ḥaram*, beyond purely pious reasons. (Unfortunately, the question of how a tribe might establish a *ḥaram* cannot be answered.) In light of the focus on conflict prevention in the regulations, a tribe's leader could establish a *ḥaram* to prevent feuding among its members or between its members and other tribesmen. Much anthropological and ethnographic literature has focused on the necessity in kinship-based tribal societies of the development of mechanisms through which non-violent interaction within and between different groups can be normalised,¹¹⁰ and the *ḥaram* would seem to be an ideal Hījāzī solution to this problem. This is a large part of the model for the creation of sacred space in pre-Islamic Arabia offered by Serjeant based on his study of twentieth-century Ḥaḍramī *ḥawṭas*, although in an important divergence there is no evidence for the necessary presence of a local holy man or *manṣab* from a recognised holy family.¹¹¹ We can, however, adapt Serjeant's model in light of the evidence gained from Ibn al-A'rābī's narrative about Buss. In this case, a holy man from a holy family was not necessary; rather the Banū Baghid of Ghaṭafān and Riyāḥ b. Zālim unilaterally declared the creation of a *ḥaram* at Buss once they believed they were powerful enough to do so. The establishment of a

¹⁰⁸ Kister has argued that Zuhayr b. Janāb destroyed Ghaṭafān's *ḥaram* in an attempt to please Quraysh by preserving the primary position within the Hījāz of their *ḥaram* at Mecca ('Some reports concerning Mecca', 44–5, 50–1), and Jawād 'Alī has hinted at the same possibility in his *Mufaṣṣal*, vi, 364–5. In Ibn al-A'rābī's narrative of Hījāzī *ḥaram*-centred politics translated here, however, Quraysh are conspicuously absent.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn al-Kalbī, *Asnām*, 13; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 315; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, iii, 664; Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, 37–42. For an overview of the material on the pre-Islamic worship of al-'Uzzā, see 'Alī, *Mufaṣṣal*, vi, 235–46; Healey, *Religion of the Nabataeans*, 114–19.

¹¹⁰ A classic study is Sahllins, *Tribesmen*, esp. 5–13. In another instructive case, many of the duties performed by the Berber iguramen of the central High Atlas in Morocco revolve around mediation between groups and the settlement of disputes; see Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, esp. 70–139.

¹¹¹ For a detailed argument against any assumption that Quraysh functioned as a holy family along Serjeant's model, see Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 180–95; idem, 'Serjeant and Meccan trade', 223–34.

ḥaram by a tribe also served to highlight its strength and declare itself independent from the authority or influence of others. We now turn in the next chapter to the evidence for Muḥammad's establishment of a *ḥaram* at Medina, and what insights can be gained for our understanding of that event by applying the model for the creation of Ḥijāzī *ḥarams* established here.

Muḥammad and the 'Constitution of Medina': The Declaration of Medina's *Ḥaram*

Among the practices of sanctifying space in the Ḥijāz immediately preceding and during Muḥammad's career, the *ḥaram* was one of the most important and so it comes as no great surprise to learn that Muḥammad utilised such a space at Medina after his *hijra*. Whereas we have seen that practically no information exists about how Mecca and Wajj became *ḥarams*, and only a limited amount about Buss, we learn much more from Arabic sources about Medina's establishment as a *ḥaram* (Ar. *tahrīm*), in no small part because it was widely held to have occurred during the career of the Prophet. Upon perusal, much of this material may appear to be as legendary as that concerning the origins of the Meccan *ḥaram*, but amid all of this one particularly important early document has been preserved that helps shed genuine light on the matter: the so-called 'Constitution of Medina'. This document will be analysed in this chapter and, as we will see, the evidence that it provides can be fitted to the model for the creation of a Ḥijāzī *ḥaram* arrived at in the conclusion to Chapter 1. Before we get to this document, however, it may help to begin with an overview of Medina's circumstances at the time when Muḥammad arrived in 1/622.

MEDINA ON THE EVE OF THE HIJRA

By the time Muḥammad came to Medina (Yathrib) the area had evidently been settled for a very long time.¹ Sources for the ancient world

¹ Nomenclature can get slightly confusing here. The name 'Medina', used to refer both to the oasis as a whole and, more specifically, to the Islamic town which developed in the

mention the town on a handful of occasions. Some Muslim historians thought the town to be extremely ancient: Ibn Zabāla (d. after 199/814) has it inhabited by the Amalekites during the time of Moses.² This is legend rather than history, but the first known references to settlement at Medina are nonetheless early. An inscription of the Babylonian king Nabonidus (r. 556–539 BCE), discovered in 1956 in Harran, mentions 'Yatribu' (*ya-at-ri-bu*) among the towns of northwest Arabia in which the king sojourned for roughly a decade.³ A Minaean inscription found near the ancient city of Ma'in in South Arabia (datable to the second half of the first millennium BCE), which records some form of registration of women from various non-Minaean lands, mentions two originally from Yathrib (*yṭrb*).⁴ The next reference, however, comes much later when 'Lathrepta/Lathrippa' (Λαθρεπτα/Λαθριππα) was included among the towns of the inland parts of Arabia Eudaimōn in the second century CE *Geography* of Ptolemy.⁵ It is then mentioned again twice in the mid sixth century CE: the first time as 'Iathrippa' (Ιαθριππα) by Stephanus Byzantinus (fl. ca. 528–35 CE), who located it near Hegra (al-Ḥijr/Madā'in Ṣāliḥ);⁶ the second time in a Sabaic inscription of the South Arabian ruler Abraha, written shortly after 552 CE and discovered in 2009, in which he announced the establishment of his authority over various areas of the Arabian Peninsula, including Yathrib (*yṭrb*).⁷ It is not clear whether the toponyms in these texts were intended to indicate the whole oasis or the more specific northwest settlement also called Yathrib.

immediate environs of the Prophet's Mosque, is usually – although certainly not ubiquitously – held to have originated after the *hijra*. Before then, the oasis was apparently referred to by the name 'Yathrib', although this is also the name of a specific settlement within the area, to the northwest. Generally in this book, I use Medina for both the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. I only use Yathrib when that is the precise term used by the sources I am discussing, or when I am referring specifically to the settlement in the northwest which went by that name.

² Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 296–7.

³ Gadd, 'Harran inscriptions', 58–9 (= H2, A, col. 1, l. 25), 84.

⁴ Mlaker, *Hierodulenlisten*, 18, 27; and on the text in general, see Kitchen, *Documentation*, II, 411. Although the inscription is frequently referred to as a 'list of hierodules', various other, less fantastical interpretations have been proposed; see Robin, 'Quelques épisodes', 62.

⁵ Ptolemy, *Geog.*, VI.7.31.

⁶ Stephanus Byzantinus, *Ethnika*, ed. Meineke, 321, ll. 13–14 (= text and trans. Billerbeck and Zubler, 258–9).

⁷ This inscription (Murayghān 3) has recently been published by Robin and Tayran, 'Soixante-dix ans avant l'islam'; it is also discussed further in Robin, 'L'Arabie à la veille de l'islam', 233–4; idem, 'Arabia and Ethiopia', 287; idem, 'Abraha', 8, 49–50.

That appears to have been the sum total of references to the oasis before the time of Muḥammad. The Middle Persian (Pahlavi) *Shahrestānīhā-ye Īrānshahr* does indicate that either one of the Sasanian kings of Iran or the Roman emperors built Mecca and Medina (*Makkāh ut Madīnak*),⁸ but this text as it has come down to us was redacted quite clearly during the reign of the Abbasid caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75). Although it was based on earlier sources, these references to Mecca and Medina, by those names at least, are probably a result of later, Islamic-era editorial work.⁹ Even the seventh-century CE Armenian geography attributed to Ananias of Shirak, which does include information on Arabia and mentions a place 'which I think the Arabs call Mecca', does not mention Medina.¹⁰

This being the extent of the information that contemporary sources provide, historians have had to rely almost entirely on the later Arabic sources for more detailed information about pre-Islamic Medina and its inhabitants.¹¹ A number of these later sources discuss Medina's history before Muḥammad's *hijra*, and they mostly agree that on the eve of that event two distinct groups, Jews and others, inhabited the town.¹² The non-Jewish inhabitants of the town are said to have belonged to two tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj, which provided numerous sub-tribes and clans. Going further up the genealogical tree, the Aws and the Khazraj claimed a common ancestor and so some sources refer to them together as the Banū Qayla. The Aws and the Khazraj, who later became Muḥammad's 'helpers' (Ar. *anṣār*), are usually held to have been South Arabian in origin, and the legends say that they left South Arabia for Medina after the bursting of the Mārib dam.¹³

Apparently the Jews were in Medina already when the Aws and the Khazraj arrived there. They too were divided into many tribes and clans,

⁸ *Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals*, 16 (§33), 82–3.

⁹ Markwart's introduction to *ibid.*, 5. A much more obvious Abbasid anachronism in the work is the reference (at 23 [§61]) to the construction of Baghdad (Bakdāt) by the caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (Abū-Gāfar), who was known as a penny-pincher (Abū-davānīk, from his Arabic nickname, Abū al-Dawānīq).

¹⁰ Ananias of Shirak (attrib.) *Geography*, 70–2.

¹¹ For Medina on the eve of Islam, see for example Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, IV, 1–64; Wensinck, *Muhammad and the Jews*, 6–38; Hasson, 'Contributions'; Munt, 'Prophet's city'. A number of studies by Michael Lecker are extremely important, some of which are mentioned in the bibliography.

¹² Many studies refer to the non-Jewish inhabitants simply as 'Arabs', but because there is every possibility that many, perhaps the vast majority, of the Jews in the area were local converts rather than the descendants of emigrants from Palestine, it does not seem appropriate to divide the population this way.

¹³ For example, al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 309–26.

of which the Banū al-Naḍīr, Banū Qurayza and Banū Qaynuqā' are the most famous because of their roles in biographies of the Prophet.¹⁴ How exactly they came to be in Medina, and whether they were Jewish emigrants from Palestine or local converts, has been much debated by scholars, pre-modern and modern alike, and this need not concern us here.¹⁵ Muslim historians tell us, sometimes in colourful accounts, that by the time Muḥammad arrived in Medina, the Aws and the Khazraj had overcome the Jews and were in control of the town.¹⁶ Michael Lecker has, however, carefully analysed the relevant reports and concluded that in fact many Jewish groups remained in powerful positions for a few years after the *hijra*.¹⁷ Even according to the traditional narrative, the Aws and the Khazraj did not control the town in harmony with one another; rather the various tribes, sub-tribes and clans and their Jewish allies are said to have feuded frequently and violently with one another.¹⁸ It is possible that shortly before Muḥammad's arrival in Medina, in the aftermath of the famous Battle of Bu'ath (five or six years before the *hijra*), the Aws and the Khazraj had begun to sort their affairs out. Some sources mention that certain groups sought to recognise one 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy, of the 'Awf b. al-Khazraj, as a 'king' (*malik*), perhaps an arbitrator in the disputes, although the extant material can be quite contradictory on this particular question.¹⁹

¹⁴ See al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 299–308; for discussion, see Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 47–87.

¹⁵ For example, Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, XXII, 107–9; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, IV, 461–2; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 296–9; Gil, 'Origin'; Newby, *History of the Jews*, 14–32; 49–77; Robin, 'Himyar et Israël', 862–7. An important recent study of the Jews in the pre-Islamic northern Hijāz, based on the contemporary epigraphic evidence, is Hoyland, 'Jews of the Hijaz'.

¹⁶ For one colourful account featuring the Jewish king al-Fityawn, who insisted on being the first to sleep with all newly married non-Jewish women, see Munt, 'Prophet's city', 112–17.

¹⁷ Esp. Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans*, and idem, 'Were the Jewish tribes'.

¹⁸ Esp. Hasson, 'Contributions'.

¹⁹ Lecker, 'King Ibn Ubayy'. 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy is not the only 'king' of Medina reported in our sources; see also the cases of al-Fityawn (see note 16) and 'Amr b. al-It'nāba (see note 38). Al-Samhūdī (*Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 365, almost certainly quoting Ibn Zabāla) was also aware of a 'king' of the Banū Salima of the Khazraj called Ama b. Harām. For a general introduction to these 'kings', see Lecker, 'King Ibn Ubayy', 33–6. On the Battle of Bu'ath, see *EP*, s.v. 'Bu'ath' (M. Lecker). Crone raises an important historiographical challenge to Ibn Ishāq's depiction of Medina on the eve of the *hijra* as disunited and at the same time united under Ibn Ubayy; see her *Meccan Trade*, 217–19; and 'Serjeant and Meccan trade', 234–5. Lecker, however, offers the reasonable solution that Ibn Ubayy's 'kingship' was not recognised by all the inhabitants of Medina, not even all of the Khazraj.

The apparently frequent and violent struggles among the different groups inhabiting the area perhaps explain one of the most notable features of Medina's pre- and early Islamic topography, namely the presence of a number of tower houses (*ātām* or *uṭūm*, sing. *uṭūm*) and fortifications (*ḥuṣūn*, sing. *ḥiṣn*), often considerably substantial structures.²⁰ Medina's first local historian, Ibn Zabāla, had much to say about these tower houses, some (but unfortunately not all) of which al-Samhūdī incorporated into his *Wafā' al-wafā'*.²¹ According to al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956), they were pulled down during the reign of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (r. 23–35/644–56), but some ruins remained.²² 'Abd al-Qaddūs al-Anṣārī in the twentieth century discussed two structures which he saw in Medina and which he suggested were surviving remnants of these tower houses.²³ According to Ibn al-Najjār (d. 643/1245), the Jewish groups had fifty-nine tower houses and the other tribes (before the arrival of the Aws and the Khazraj) thirteen.²⁴ Ibn al-Najjār highlights the importance of these structures: 'The tower houses were the glory ('izz) of the Medinans and their protection, in which they fortified themselves against their enemies.'²⁵

External powers may have exercised a degree of control over Medina at times during the first six centuries CE. Some of the attempts by certain Himyarite and Ethiopian rulers, most famously Abraha in the mid sixth century CE, to establish a degree of control over the Ḥijāz are well known to modern scholars, although they dispute quite how successful these attempts were.²⁶ A Greek inscription from Adulis recorded by the sixth century CE visitor Cosmas Indicopleustes was set up by an Ethiopian ruler who waged war 'from the town of Leukē [on the Red Sea coast somewhere in the northern Ḥijāz] to the territories of the Sabaeans', and Christian Robin has argued that this text is perhaps datable to the reign of Gadara (ca. 200–ca. 220 CE).²⁷ Inscriptions from South Arabia

²⁰ Madanī, 'Uṭūm al-Madīna'; Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans*, 1–18.

²¹ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 301–8.

²² Al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 206; Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans*, 13.

²³ Al-Anṣārī, *Āthār al-Madīna*, 42–53.

²⁴ Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 38–9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 39. These tower houses' renown was also recognised in Prophetic *ḥadīths*; see Wensinck, *Concordance*, I, 67 (s.v. '-ṭ-m').

²⁶ See now Gajda, *Royaume de Ḥimyar*, 51–8, 77–9, 137–46; Robin, 'L'Arabie à la veille de l'Islam'; *idem*, 'Arabia and Ethiopia', esp. 272–3, 285–7; *idem*, 'Abraha'; Bowersock, *Throne of Adulis*, 115–17.

²⁷ Cosmas, *Christian Topography*, II.62; Robin, 'Arabia and Ethiopia', 277–8. Bowersock suggests that the Ethiopian ruler who established this inscription could in fact have been one Sembrouthes, who is known only from a single Greek inscription found in Eritrea; see his *Throne of Adulis*, 57–8.

do attest to Ethiopian intervention in that region for much of the third century CE (ca. 200–70), but there is no other evidence for the extension of Ethiopians' authority anywhere particularly near to Medina.²⁸ During the fourth and fifth centuries CE, the Himyarites extended the reach of their authority over large parts of central and western Arabia, although perhaps not over the oases of the Ḥijāz: in an inscription (Ry 509) from Wādī Māsil in Najd (called *m's'l gmḥn* in the text; one hundred and fifty miles west of Riyadh), probably composed between 433 and 455 CE, the Himyarite king Abikarib As'ad together with his son and co-regent Ḥaṣṣān Yuha'min adopted the new title, 'Kings of Saba', Dhū Raydān, Ḥaḍramawt, Yamanat, and the Arabs of Ṭawd and the Tihāma'.²⁹ The recently discovered Abraha inscription does mention Yathrib within the regions under his control, but this may have better represented wishful thinking than reality.³⁰

Epigraphic evidence from Rawwāfa and al-Ḥijr/Madā'in Ṣāliḥ (approximately two hundred miles north of Medina) – the former relating to the construction of a temple, the latter probably to a wall – points to a Roman presence of some kind in the northern Ḥijāz in the second century CE, but there is little similar evidence for that presence's continuation into the following centuries.³¹ The inhabitants of Medina may, however, have retained relatively close contacts with the so-called 'Saracen' groups on the more immediate fringes of the Roman Empire. In an Old Arabic graffito from Jabal Usays (approximately sixty miles southeast of Damascus) dated to 528–9 CE (year 423 of Provincia Arabia), one Ruqaym b. Mu'arrif al-Awsī mentions that 'al-Ḥārith the king' (*'l-ḥrt 'l-mlk*) – the Ghassanid/Jafnid leader al-Ḥārith b. Jabala – had sent him to garrison (*mslḥh*, Classical Arabic: *maslaḥat*^{am}) the region.³² The Aws, to which Ruqaym's *nisba* refers,

²⁸ Robin, 'Première intervention abyssine'.

²⁹ *mlky s'b' wdrydn wḥḍmwt w-ymnt w-'rb ṭwd wthmt*; discussed in Robin, 'Royaume Ḥujride', 675–85; Gajda, *Royaume de Himyar*, 53–6. Robin translates *ṭwd* (Ṭawd) and *thmt* (the Tihāma) as 'the highlands' ('le Haut Pays) and 'the coast' ('la Côte') respectively and suggests that these two terms signify 'the vast plateau of central Arabia (Najd in Arabic) and the coastal plain from the Red Sea to the heights of Mecca' (quote from 681).

³⁰ For the inscription, see note 7. Christian Robin's entirely reasonable albeit unproven suggestion is that Abraha controlled the Ḥijāz, including Medina, for a short time after 552 CE before South Arabian power throughout that region collapsed entirely, perhaps as a result of the famous failed assault on Mecca recollected by later Arabic works; see his 'Arabia and Ethiopia', 287, 301; also *idem*, 'Abraha'.

³¹ See now Fisher, *Between Empires*, 75, with further bibliography.

³² I follow the reading of the inscription in Robin and Gorea, 'Réexamen', apart from the name 'Ruqaym b. Mu'arrif', which is the reading of Macdonald, 'Old Arabic graffito'.

could be one of the two main non-Jewish tribes in Medina, although it is a fairly common Arabic name and scholars have found little other evidence for strong links between the Medinan Aws and Ghassān.

There is a small body of evidence, even apart from the *Shahrestānīhā-ye Īrānshahr*, which suggests that the Sasanian kings exerted some power and influence over Medina in the mid-to-late sixth and early seventh centuries CE. The principal evidence is provided in a short extract in Ibn Khurradādhbih's (wr. late third/ninth century) geographical treatise:

[Medina] is also called Yathrib. In pre-Islamic times (*al-jāhiliyya*), a tax official ('*āmīl*') was in charge over it and over Tihāma on behalf of the *marzubān* of al-Zāra³³ who collected its taxes (*kharāj*). Qurayza and al-Naḍīr were 'kings' (*mulūk*) whom [the Persians] put in charge over Medina, the Aws, and the Khazraj. Concerning that, a poet of the *ansār* said:³⁴

You pay the tax (*kharj*) after the tax (*kharāj*) of Kisrā³⁵
and a tax (*kharj*) from Qurayza and al-Naḍīr.³⁶

If the evidence of this report is viewed together with the *Shahrestānīhā-ye Īrānshahr* – even if the names Mecca and Medina are later interpolations into this text, the idea that the Sasanian kings claimed that their power extended this far may not be anachronistic³⁷ – it becomes possible that some loose form of Sasanian influence may have stretched this far into the western half of the Arabian Peninsula shortly before Muḥammad's *hijra*. This influence would presumably at times have been mediated by the Sasanians' Nasrid/Lakhmid allies, and according to one much later writer, Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī (d. ca. 685/1286–7), the ruler of al-Ḥīra, al-Nu'mān (III) b. al-Mundhir (r. 580–602 CE), appointed a Khazrajī called 'Amr b. al-It'nāba as 'king' (*malīk*) of Medina on his behalf.³⁸ By the time

³³ Ibn Khurradādhbih has *al-bādiya*, 'the steppe/desert', instead of al-Zāra, but Lecker reasonably prefers Yāqūt's reading of the latter – a location on the Persian Gulf, near al-Qaṭīf – as a *lectio difficilior*; see his 'Levy of taxes', 111, 120–3.

³⁴ Elsewhere, this verse is included within a poem ascribed to 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. 'Amr al-Ghassānī, known as Ibn Buqayla, who was not one of the *ansār*. It is also clear from the full text of the poem that Ibn Khurradādhbih has quoted this line somewhat out of context; see further Lecker, 'Levy of taxes', 111–12, 115–20.

³⁵ Some versions of the fuller poem have Buṣrā (i.e. ancient Bostra in Syria) instead of Kisrā; Lecker quite reasonably prefers the former as another *lectio difficilior*, but the case here does not seem quite as clear-cut; see his 'Levy of taxes', 116–20.

³⁶ Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 128. Parts of this passage are also cited in Ibn Rusta, *A'lāq*, 177; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, iv, 460; and al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, iv, 181. For further discussion, see Kister, 'al-Ḥīra', 145–9; Lecker, 'Levy of taxes'.

³⁷ For an important study of how accurately this text reflects both late Sasanian administrative geography and territorial claims, see Gyselen, 'Données'.

³⁸ Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī, *Nashwat al-tarab*, i, 189–90, 196; discussion in Kister, 'al-Ḥīra', 147–9; Lecker, 'Levy of taxes', 112–15. Earlier sources acknowledge 'Amr b. al-It'nāba's

Muḥammad arrived, however, there appears to have been no trace of any external authority over the town, a situation which fits with recent arguments – based on a combination of literary and material evidence – that over the second half of the sixth century CE the power and authority of many of the important players in Arabian politics (Himyarites, Ghassanids, Lakhmids and others) began to collapse.³⁹

When Muḥammad left Mecca and emigrated to Medina, he was not so much moving to a town in the sense of a continuously densely settled area (although it is convenient to call it a town), but rather to an oasis comprising a somewhat looser collection of disparate settlements.⁴⁰ The Islamic town, as it developed over the centuries following the *hijra*, came, somewhat unsurprisingly, to be centred around the Prophet's Mosque; it actually seems to have extended less than half a mile in each direction from that building.⁴¹ That the otherwise disparate pre-Islamic settlements were considered a unity is probably a result of Medina's precise location. The whole area is surrounded to the west, south and east by tracts of volcanic rocks, known as *ḥirār* (sing. *ḥarra*; sometimes in the sources they are called *lābāt*, sing. *lāba*). The western *ḥarra* is known as Ḥarrat al-Wabara and the eastern *ḥarra* is known as Ḥarrat Wāqim; these two *ḥarras* meet in the south. There are also mountains in the vicinity of Medina, two of which are especially prominent in the sources. To the north is Uḥud, which lent its name to a famous battle between Muḥammad's nascent community and Quraysh of Mecca in Shawwāl 3/March–April 625; to the southwest is 'Ayr, about seven miles from Uḥud. These surrounding *ḥarras* and mountains serve effectively to demarcate the settlements within from the areas outside, and have played a considerable role in the development of the modern city.

Within the boundaries these natural barriers provide, the settlements were spread out over an area of about five miles (north to south) by a little less than that (east to west). That they sprung up where they did and not all together in one place is probably to do with the availability of cultivable land.⁴² Medina is itself relatively flat with a slight

kingship, but do not state that al-Nu'mān raised him to it; see, for example, Abū 'Ubayda *apud* Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, xi, 121.

³⁹ Overview in Robin, 'Arabia and Ethiopia', 297–9; also see Korotaev et al., 'Origins of Islam', 243–5.

⁴⁰ For modern discussions of Medina's topography, see the references in note 11, and al-'Alī, 'Studies'; Makki, *Medina*. Several studies by Michael Lecker, some of which are listed in the bibliography, are again important.

⁴¹ See the further discussion in Munt, 'Construction'.

⁴² For which, see Makki, *Medina*, 15–17, 21–2.

gradient uphill from north to south, from 598 to 620 metres above sea level; pre-modern scholars recognised this fact by designating the south of the area as al-Āliya (or al-ʿAwālī), ‘upper’, and the north as al-Sāfila, ‘lower’. Because rainfall in Medina is usually low and a little erratic – annual rainfall was 11 mm in 1962, but 103.8 mm in 1971⁴³ – agriculture in the area depends on ground water. Three major *wādīs* run through or by Medina – ‘Aqīq from the southwest, Buṭḥān (which is itself fed by others) from the southeast and Qanāt from the east – and they converge to the northwest of the town. They are, of course, almost completely dry all year round, and when they do fill with water have a tendency to cause damaging floods; Buṭḥān continued to pose a flood threat to the town until the construction of bridges and a dam in 1966.⁴⁴ Access to ground water is usually achieved through wells and natural seasonal springs.⁴⁵

Medina certainly had agricultural enterprises, and during the early Islamic centuries a number of prominent individuals acquired and exploited estates in the area.⁴⁶ In the mid 1940s it was estimated that date palms occupied nine-tenths of the agricultural land in the oases of western Arabia,⁴⁷ and it seems that they were Medina’s most prominent produce in the early Islamic sources. In an oration which Ibn Zabāla attributed to ‘Amr b. ʿĀmir, the leader of the South Arabian emigrants during their search for a new home after the bursting of the Mārib dam, Medina is referred to as ‘Yathrib of the date palms’ (*Yathrib dhāt al-nakhl*).⁴⁸ Medina’s dates were even considered to have medicinal properties. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) had ʿĀ’isha report that the Prophet said, ‘In the dry dates (*tamr*) of the ʿĀliya [of Medina] is a cure.’⁴⁹ Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/889) included in his *Sunan* a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet diagnosed Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ with cardiac trouble (*maʿfūd*) and sent him to a Thaqafī doctor who would give him Medinan dates as a cure.⁵⁰ The geographer al-Iṣṭakhṛī (wr. second quarter of the fourth/tenth century) stated that Medina had a number of date palms and that the water

⁴³ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁵ For a concise third-/ninth-century account of Medina’s *wādīs* and ground water access, see al-Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān*, 312–13; for more detail, see al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafā*, III, 339–402; IV, 7–13, 54–70.

⁴⁶ Al-ʿAlī, ‘Milkiyyāt al-arāḍī’; Kister, ‘Battle of the Ḥarra’.

⁴⁷ *Western Arabia*, 473, 486–90.

⁴⁸ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafā*, I, 316.

⁴⁹ Aḥmad, *Musnad*, VI, 77.

⁵⁰ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, IV, 134 (*Kitāb al-Ṭibb*, bāb 12).

for their cultivation was drawn up through wells.⁵¹ Another geographer, Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), however, recorded a *ḥadīth* attributed to the Companion Abū Hurayra in which the Prophet declares that, 'Whosoever bears with patience the dry heat of Medina, I will be for him a witness and an intercessor on the Day of Resurrection', which may imply that in earlier periods water and other resources were scarcer in Medina than later authors have suggested.⁵² If this were the case, there was probably an intense struggle for those resources among the area's inhabitants.⁵³

‘I HAVE MADE WHAT IS BETWEEN MEDINA’S TWO LĀBAS
A ḤARAM JUST AS ABRAHAM MADE MECCA A ḤARAM’:
ISLAMIC SOURCES ON MEDINA’S TAḤRĪM

Muslim scholars discussed Medina's *ḥaram* and its *taḥrīm* in varying degrees of detail, and by the late second/eighth century at the latest a large number of different traditions dealing with Medina's *ḥaram* and *taḥrīm* were in circulation. It is a well-established tenet of modern historiography of the early Islamic period that *ḥadīths* and other reports about the first/seventh century compiled in works by scholars active in later centuries tend to tell us more about the concerns of those later scholars than they do about the period they purport to describe. In the case of Medina's *taḥrīm*, there are also more particular reasons why the later reports and *ḥadīths* should be left aside, at least for an investigation of Medina's first declaration as a *ḥaram*. These traditions are themselves interesting for other reasons, especially because they have much to tell us about the process(es) by which doctrines and ideas attached to Medina's *ḥaram* emerged and developed, but that will be the focus of the next chapter. Here the picture they portray about Medina's *taḥrīm* will be introduced briefly before we turn to focus on the rare evidence more likely to provide a contemporary witness.

Reports about Medina's *taḥrīm* often appear in sections of works or entire ones dedicated to the meritorious distinctions (*faḍā'il*) of the town.⁵⁴ Reports and *ḥadīths* preserved in such sections and works are

⁵¹ Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, 18.

⁵² Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, iv, 460: *man ṣabara 'alā uwār al-Madīna wa-ḥarrihā kuntu lahu yawm al-ḡiyāma shafī'm shahīd'm*.

⁵³ As is discussed in Hasson, 'Contributions'.

⁵⁴ On *faḍā'il al-buldān*, 'the merits of countries', literature, see esp. Gruber, *Verdienst und Rang*, 49–82; Kister, 'Sanctity joint and divided'.

dedicated to demonstrating that Medina is a very special town, uniquely so among all other towns in the world. The following, for example, are some of the *faḍā'il* attributed to Medina in al-Bukhārī's (d. 256/870) collection of *ḥadīths*, a few of which seem fairly cryptic:⁵⁵ prayer in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina is worth one thousand prayers in any other mosque; the area between the Prophet's grave and *minbar* within his mosque is one of the gardens of Paradise; Medina expels (unworthy) people just as bellows expel the impurities from iron; 'faith comes creeping to Medina just as a serpent creeps to its hole'; neither plague (*ṭā'ūn*) nor the 'Antichrist' (*al-dajjāl*) can enter Medina because the city is guarded by angels; no one will harm Medina's inhabitants without dissolving like salt in water; the Prophet called on God to grant Medina double the blessing (*baraka*) he gave Meccā. These are just some of al-Bukhārī's traditions, and his collection is far from all-inclusive. Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Nasā'ī (d. ca. 303/915), for example, also included in his compilation the following praise of Medina's religious scholars, which is attributed to the Prophet: 'They will travel (*yadribūna akbād al-ibil*) and seek knowledge ('*ilm*), but they will not find any scholar ('*ālim*) more knowledgeable than the Medinan scholar.'⁵⁶

The main problem with accepting these sources' rationale for the creation of the Medinan *ḥaram* is that the little contemporary evidence that we possess urges against it. The most oft-cited group of reports have Muḥammad state that Abraham had made Meccā a *ḥaram* and so he was making Medina one too.⁵⁷ Sometimes it is made explicit that all of God's messengers had their *ḥaram*.⁵⁸ The connection made with the Abrahamic

⁵⁵ Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, i, 299–301 (*Kitāb Faḍl al-ṣalāt fī masjid Makka wa-al-Madīna*), 467–72 (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Madīna*). For the most extensive pre-modern collection of *faḍā'il* traditions concerning Medina, and a discussion of those traditions, see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, esp. i, 93–290; a modern summary of Medina's principal distinctions can be found in Casewit, 'Faḍā'il al-Madīnah'.

⁵⁶ Al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, ii, 489.

⁵⁷ For some of the earliest extant appearances of these reports, see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, xiii, 125; Mālik, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat Yaḥyā*], ii, 467; al-Wāqidī, *Maghāzī*, i, 22; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, ix, 262; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, iii, 393; al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, ii, 221 (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, bāb 71), 222 (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, bāb 74), 346 (*Kitāb al-Anbiyā'*, bāb 10); iii, 88 (*Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, bāb 27), 502–3 (*Kitāb al-Aṭ'ima*, bāb 28); iv, 434 (*Kitāb al-I'tisām*, bāb 16); al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, v, 678 (*Kitāb al-Manāqib*, bāb 67); Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr*, i, 351, 359; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 7–8; al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, ii, 485–8; Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī, *Musnad*, ii, 58–9, 291; iv, 113.

⁵⁸ It was presumably with this in mind that the 'false' prophet Musaylima was later said to have had his own *ḥaram* in al-Yamāma in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, i, 1932–3; Décobert, *Mendiant*, 266–7; Kister, 'Struggle', 21–2.

origin of Mecca's *ḥaram* was clearly intended to provide divine sanction for the Medinan *ḥaram* and to link Muḥammad's actions to those of Abraham, widely acknowledged as the establisher of monotheism in Arabia. This was necessary because the Qur'ān seems to recognise one pre-eminent *ḥaram*, which traditional exegesis came to regard as Mecca's.⁵⁹ Although the Qur'ān itself does not necessarily validate this interpretation, there is as yet little indisputable evidence for rejecting it. There is certainly no explicit evidence linking the Qur'ān's *ḥaram* or *al-masjid al-ḥarām* to Medina. Medina is supposedly mentioned five times in the Qur'ān, four times as '*al-madīna*' and once as 'Yathrib'. Even if we reject the connection between the Quranic '*al-madīna*' and Medina, the Yathrib reference at least is incontrovertible, although we do not know if it meant the area of Medina as a whole or the individual settlement also known as Yathrib. None of these verses, however, contains any suggestion that the area was a sacred enclave.⁶⁰ Other, non-Quranic sources had to be found to demonstrate the divine sanction for Muḥammad's *ḥaram* at Medina, and this tradition linking it with Abraham and Mecca served that purpose.

Another example of the sort of problems we encounter concerns the few traditions that discuss when Muḥammad declared Medina a *ḥaram*. Most sources actually display a startling lack of interest in this question. A few *ḥadīths*, however, do give an explicit date, namely after the raid on Khaybar (6 or 7/628).⁶¹ Almost all the relevant traditions derive from al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*. One version, with an *isnād* running back to the Companion Anas b. Mālik, states:

I left with the Messenger of God (ṣ) for Khaybar, serving him. When the Prophet (ṣ) came back on his return and Uḥud appeared before him, he said, 'This is a mountain which loves us and which we love.' Then he indicated with his hands towards Medina and said, 'O God! I am making what is between its two *lābas* a *ḥaram*, just as Abraham made Mecca a *ḥaram*. O God! Bless for us our *ṣā'* and our *mudd*!'⁶²

⁵⁹ For example, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, x, 89–90. There were also *ḥadīths* brought into circulation which used the Quranic term *ḥaram āmin* to refer to Medina's *ḥaram*; see, for example, Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 59; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, xi, 221; xiii, 124; al-Marjānī, *Bahaj al-nufūs*, i, 248; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq*, 337.

⁶⁰ Q9.101; 9.120; 33.13; 33.60; 63.8.

⁶¹ This date was followed in Serjeant, 'Haram and hawtah', 50; idem, '*Sunnah jāmi'ah*', 34.

⁶² Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, ii, 221 (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, bāb 71); alternatives at ii, 222 (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, bāb 74); iii, 502–3 (*Kitāb al-Aṭ'ima*, bāb 28). Versions of such traditions which do not explicitly cite al-Bukhārī as a source include al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, v, 322–3; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istidhāk*, xxvi, 33–4. According to Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte*,

Other reports are much longer than this and have a more detailed account of the journeys to and from Khaybar.

In light of other traditions, however, it seems quite plausible that the campaign against Khaybar and Medina's *taḥrīm* were not originally linked. For one thing, several of the individual aspects which comprise this *ḥadīth* – that is, the Prophet's statements about Uḥud, Medina's *taḥrīm* and the *ṣā'* and *mudd* – appear in other *ḥadīths* in which they are neither linked with one another nor with Khaybar. Such *ḥadīths* can be found in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* as well as elsewhere.⁶³ In at least two traditions, the Prophet's statement about Uḥud is actually connected with the raid on Tabūk in 9/630, not Khaybar.⁶⁴ It is at least possible that the combination of all three Prophetic statements in association with the raid on Khaybar is the original tradition, but we simply cannot be sure. It seems equally likely that all three statements were originally separate, later being put together in a single tradition and associated with Khaybar (or Tabūk). In any case, it is not at all clear that we should be looking for one single moment when Medina was made a *ḥaram*.⁶⁵ The demarcation of a space as sacred is frequently best understood as a process rather than a single event in time, and we should not expect Medina's *taḥrīm* to offer an exception. As we will see, ideas concerning the area covered by Medina's *ḥaram* and the regulations and doctrines attached to it developed and were continuously debated over the centuries that followed Muḥammad's death.

THE 'CONSTITUTION OF MEDINA'

Alongside the numerous historical reports and Prophetic *ḥadīths*, one early document has been preserved which is absolutely invaluable for any

45–6, 51, a *mudd* is approximately 1.053 litres, and a *ṣā'* is four *mudd*. The point of the Prophet's supplication is presumably that God ensure that the Muslims prosper in Medina.

⁶³ Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, i, 376–7 (*Kitāb al-Zakāt*, bāb 54); ii, 346 (*Kitāb al-Anbiyā'*, bāb 10); iii, 88 (*Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, bāb 27); iv, 434 (*Kitāb al-I'tisām*, bāb 16); al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, iv, 898, 937 (*Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, nos. 462, 503–4); al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, v, 678 (*Kitāb al-Manāqib*, bāb 67); Mālik, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat Yahyā*], ii, 467, 471; al-Janādī, *Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, 44; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, v, 322. For examples of *ṣā'* and *mudd* traditions, see Wensinck, *Concordance*, iii, 442 (s.v. 's-w-').

⁶⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, i, 376–7 (*Kitāb al-Zakāt*, bāb 54); al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, iv, 937 (*Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, no. 503).

⁶⁵ Lecker suggests that there were at least three distinct phases to Medina's *taḥrīm*; see his *Constitution of Medina*, 166–9, 201.

discussion of Medina's *taḥrīm*: the 'Constitution of Medina'. Researchers have carried out a fair amount of work on this document, and a brief survey of some of it is important here, particularly concerning its authenticity, composition and date.⁶⁶ The term 'Constitution of Medina', by which this document is usually referred to, is an entirely anachronistic one. The document refers to itself simply as a *kitāb* (§1), a 'piece of writing', or as a *ṣaḥīfa* (§49), which 'seems to refer to a document or a sheet, written on any kind of material, such as leather or stone.'⁶⁷ Whilst 'Constitution of Medina' is a useful enough term, it is unfortunate that it is an anachronism that appears to have inspired a whole collection of further anachronistic studies which seek to interpret the document in very modern ways.⁶⁸

What appears to be a complete copy of the 'Constitution of Medina' is preserved in two redactions, by Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq (d. ca. 150/767–8), via 'Abd al-Malik b. Hishām (d. ca. 218/833–4), and by Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838–9).⁶⁹ There seems to have been a third redaction, preserved by Ibn Abī Khaythama (d. 279/892) and known to Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 734/1334).⁷⁰ All later versions are copies of these two or three recensions, although they do include variants in places.⁷¹ The text of the 'Constitution of Medina', usually that in Ibn Iṣḥāq's recension,

⁶⁶ The most useful discussion now, with further bibliography, is Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*.

⁶⁷ Maraqtan, 'Writing materials', 309. The clauses are cited according to Lecker's numbering.

⁶⁸ Muhammad Hamidullah, for example, referred to it in the title of an important study as the 'Earliest written-constitution of a state in the world'.

⁶⁹ Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, II, 147–50; Abū 'Ubayd, *Amwāl*, 215–17. Both texts are provided and translated in Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 5–39.

⁷⁰ Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *Uyūn al-athar*, I, 240; Hamidullah, 'Earliest written-constitution', 12; Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 200–3.

⁷¹ For variants, see Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 10–18, 21–6. The process of the document's transmission remains poorly understood, although see for now especially Wensinck, *Muhammad and the Jews*, 61–8; Serjeant, 'Constitution of Medina', 4–6; and Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 191–203. Also relevant to any full study of the document's transmission are the number of traditions in which 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is said to have kept a copy of a document (*ṣaḥīfa*) that declared Medina a *ḥaram* alongside several other clauses, most of which resemble regulations in the 'Constitution of Medina'; see, for example, Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaḥ*, XIII, 124; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaḥ*, IX, 263; al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, I, 467–8 (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, *bāb* 1); II, 298–9 (*Kitāb al-Jizya*, *bāb* 17); Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, II, 363–4 (*Kitāb al-Manāsik*, *bāb* 95); Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr*, I, 357–8; al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, II, 486; and al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, IV, 900–1 (*Kitāb al-Hajj*, nos. 467–8). These traditions suggest that many Muslims who were not interested in preserving the whole 'Constitution of Medina' did nonetheless transmit what they saw as the relevant parts of the document.

is generally accepted as essentially reliable by most modern researchers of early Islamic history.⁷²

The reasons most commonly cited in favour of the document's authenticity are still those Julius Wellhausen gave more than a century ago:⁷³ that the document includes numerous statements and sentiments that a later forger is unlikely to have put in (for example, Quraysh – the family group that came to monopolise the caliphal office quite soon after Muḥammad's death – are singled out for special distinction as enemies of the Muslims [§§23; 54]); that the document does not stress some points that a later forger might be expected to (for example, Muḥammad's status as the Messenger of God); and that the language is generally archaic and includes very few obviously classically Islamic phrases. There is, however, much more debate concerning the composition of the document. Was it originally one document or many? The earliest scholars who studied the 'Constitution of Medina' appear to have assumed that it was one document (that is, after all, how it is transmitted), but in 1956 Montgomery Watt suggested that, 'There are reasons for thinking that articles which originated at different dates have been collected.'⁷⁴ Serjeant extended this theory, in part by comparison with the style and format of modern *ḥawṭa* documents from Ḥaḍramawt, to argue that we can discern eight distinct documents in the 'Constitution of Medina'.⁷⁵ Michael Lecker has, however, now forcefully argued against these theories and demonstrated the likelihood of the original unity of the document.⁷⁶ This is important because several of Serjeant's conclusions about the circumstances of Medina's *taḥrīm* were based on his division of the 'Constitution of Medina' into eight separate documents, concluded at different times. When the document was drawn up is a question we will probably never be able to answer. For what it is worth, Ibn Hishām and Abū 'Ubayd both indicate that it was compiled very soon after the Prophet's arrival in Medina.⁷⁷

The key point, however, is that in light of this document it would seem that Muḥammad played an important role in some form of *taḥrīm*

⁷² For example, Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 7; Noth, 'Standortbestimmung der Expansion', 120.

⁷³ Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, iv, 80–1.

⁷⁴ Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, 226.

⁷⁵ Serjeant, 'Sunnah jāmi'ah'.

⁷⁶ Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 183–90. Lecker does argue (for example, 3) that the document consists of two separate treaties, one between the Meccan 'emigrants' (*muhājirūn*) and the Median 'helpers' (*anṣār*), and the other a non-belligerency treaty with the Jews, but suggests that these are two parts of one document.

⁷⁷ The latter is explicit: Abū 'Ubayd, *Amwāl*, 219; Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 182.

at Medina: as we will see shortly, the 'Constitution of Medina' includes a clause referring to a *ḥaram*. Elsewhere in the document, clear reference is made to Muḥammad's privileged status in the community outlined therein. The first clause declares, 'This is a document from Muḥammad the Prophet between ...', and clause twenty-six states, 'Whatsoever you disagree over, it should be brought to God and Muḥammad.'⁷⁸ (Muḥammad is also referred to in §§40, 52 and 63.) Arguments in favour of the document's early date are persuasive, and unless we assume that all these clauses or references to Muḥammad are later interpolations – for which there is no evidence – it follows that we should accept Muḥammad's role in its composition and, therefore, in the declaration of a *ḥaram* within.

We should not assume that what Muḥammad envisaged as a *ḥaram* in the 'Constitution of Medina' was particularly similar to that which many later Muslim scholars held that he established. When we turn to the opinions of these later scholars in Chapter 3, we will see that there is good reason to assume that there may not have been a particularly direct link between the *ḥaram* declared in the 'Constitution of Medina' and the one that they were discussing. Some kind of impetus to the process by which Medina came to be considered widely as a sacred space and holy city came during Muḥammad's career, but it was only the very beginning.

YATHRIB'S JAWF

Before turning to a more detailed analysis of the *ḥaram* in the 'Constitution of Medina', we should briefly consider whether Medina before the *hijra* was considered to possess any sacred spaces. It is reasonable to assume that when Muḥammad arrived in Medina following the *hijra* he would have been interested in taking over an older protected or sacred enclave there.⁷⁹ The appropriation of established sacred spaces by a new community is a well-attested phenomenon in many periods of history, including late antiquity, and because Medina had already been inhabited for a long time surely earlier sacred spaces of some sort existed there, even if just small shrines. There is, however, no evidence to support any assumption

⁷⁸ Unless otherwise stated, I follow the text of Ibn Ishāq's recension from Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 27–31, but translations are my own.

⁷⁹ It is worth mentioning in passing that many of the letters to various Arabian tribes attributed to Muḥammad in later sources show him reaffirming earlier situations rather than creating entirely new ones; a good example comes in those versions of the letter to Thaḳīf which confirmed their *ḥaram* at Wajj, discussed earlier, 37, n. 96.

that pre-*hijra* Medina possessed a large sacred space such as a *ḥaram*. Ibn al-Kalbī placed the sanctuary of the main deity of the Aws and the Khazraj, Manāt, not in Medina but somewhere near the Red Sea coast in the vicinity of a place called al-Mushallal.⁸⁰ According to a passage by the much later Egyptian historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) – probably quoting the earlier historian of Medina, Ibn Shabba (d. 262/876) – there were numerous idols within Medina itself, and the more important of these were housed in *bayts*, which may refer to temples, but could just as likely refer to simple houses.⁸¹ Uḥud, the mountain to the north of Medina, is mentioned as the location of an idol called al-Saʿīda, but there is no indication of an attached *ḥaram*.⁸² Muslim scholars use no such term to describe any location in pre-Islamic Medina.

The relevant clause of the ‘Constitution of Medina’ reads as follows, in Ibn Ishāq’s recension first and Abū ‘Ubayd’s second:

wa-inna Yathrib ḥarām jawfuhā li-ahl hādhibi al-ṣaḥīfa

And Yathrib’s *jawf* is *ḥarām* for the people [who have concluded] this document.

wa-inna al-madīna jawfuhā ḥarām li-ahl hādhibi al-ṣaḥīfa

And Medina’s *jawf* is a *ḥaram* for the people [who have concluded] this document.⁸³

The syntax of this clause in both recensions is hardly classical, and the interpretation offered here is based on those of most preceding scholars who have worked on this document.⁸⁴ The use of ‘*al-madīna*’ instead of ‘Yathrib’ in Abū ‘Ubayd’s recension represents a later attempt to replace the less dogmatically correct with the more so. Many Muslim scholars disliked referring to Medina by the name Yathrib, with Ibn Shabba, for example, including in his history of the town several *ḥadīths* in which the Prophet remonstrated against calling Medina ‘Yathrib’.⁸⁵ Their differing use of *ḥaram* and *ḥarām* is not important either, the latter simply being an adjective derived from the former and, in any case, the distinction between short ‘a’ and long ‘ā’ is not always shown in the Arabic script. There are no other variants for any word in this clause except *jawfuhā*, although some much later scholars omit the entire clause from their

⁸⁰ Ibn al-Kalbī, *Aṣnām*, 9.

⁸¹ Lecker, ‘Idol worship’.

⁸² Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 316–17.

⁸³ §49; see Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 9, 20, 30; Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, II, 149; Abū ‘Ubayd, *Amwāl*, 217.

⁸⁴ Some previous interpretations are provided in Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 165–6.

⁸⁵ Ibn Shabba, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 105–6.

summaries of the document.⁸⁶ The 'Constitution of Medina' thus states that the *jawf*, often understood here as 'valley', of Medina was made a *ḥaram* for the signatories to the document, which included the Meccan émigrés (*muhājirūn*), the Medinan Aws and Khazraj who converted to Islam and some Jewish tribes, although not the most famous three, the Banū al-Naḍīr, Banū Qurayza and Banū Qaynuqā'.⁸⁷

Some have proposed that there is nothing explicitly religious about this declaration, although I would consider such a suggestion misleading:⁸⁸ God is mentioned in this document as the ultimate arbitrator, and as such was the *ḥaram*'s guarantor (§§26; 52); Muḥammad is also referred to once (§1) as 'the Prophet' (*al-nabī*) and once (§63) as 'the Messenger of God' (*rasūl Allāh*). Because pre-Islamic Hijāzī *ḥarams* were generally held to be sacred spaces, we should not doubt that that declared by the 'Constitution of Medina' was too. Sacred spaces virtually always have important social functions as well as ritual ones, and this document presents a couple of further clues regarding those played by the *ḥaram* so declared. The first is that the document as a whole is almost exclusively concerned with regulating relations among certain groups resident in Medina at the time. It is especially concerned with preventing violent conflicts, and Lecker actually calls the second half of the document, in which the *taḥrīm* clause appears, a 'non-belligerency treaty'.⁸⁹ That this would be a major concern of Muḥammad after he came to Medina makes sense considering some of our information about the state of that town on the eve of his arrival: that for some time it had been experiencing bitter, internecine disputes, which could all too easily result in actual fighting.

Much of the narrative information about these feuds in the sources may well be the result of later attempts to provide a form of 'salvation history' for Medina, or of later anti-*anṣār* polemic, according to which the town was disunited until the Prophet saved it from itself.⁹⁰ Certain reports do suggest that these struggles were coming to an end before the *hijra*; the later Arabic sources even contain indications that fighting was perhaps not all that common and, when it did occur, was not necessarily

⁸⁶ Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 16, 25.

⁸⁷ On the signatories, see *ibid.*, 40–87. For possible separate pacts arranged with these three tribes, see Lecker, 'Did Muḥammad'.

⁸⁸ Serjeant, 'Constitution of Medina', 3–4; Peters, 'Commerce of Mecca', 18.

⁸⁹ For example, §§13–19, 24–6, 28–39, 41–2, 48, 50, 52 and 57; Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 3.

⁹⁰ Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder*, 169–85.

severe.⁹¹ Nonetheless, as we saw earlier, pre- and early Islamic Medina's landscape, especially in the 'Āliya/Āwālī, was dominated by substantial, sometimes quite large tower houses and fortifications, and this does suggest a society concerned about the real possibility of frequent bouts of violence. Such violence would at the very least have seriously disrupted the economic and social patterns of everyday life. The establishment of a *ḥaram* in Medina – an area in which, as we have seen, fighting and possibly even verbal disputation would be banned – may have been a part of Muḥammad's and other local elites' plan for ending Medina's internal conflicts.

The conflict prevention model of the creation of Ḥijāzī sacred space is, therefore, tempting, but it cannot alone account for the creation of a *ḥaram* in Yathrib's *jauf*. Many Medinan groups were not included in the 'Constitution of Medina', and the *jauf* was only confirmed as *ḥarām/a ḥaram* by 'the people [who have concluded] this document'. Serjeant's proposal, in a similar vein, that Medina's *taḥrīm* was Muḥammad's way of controlling the tribes around Medina is rather problematic because powerful surrounding tribes were not signatories to the 'Constitution of Medina', whilst some of the less powerful groups within the oasis were.⁹²

The more nuanced model arrived at in Chapter 1, however, can help us out here. In Ibn al-A'rābī's narrative about Buss, one tribal group is shown to have established its own *ḥaram* as a symbol of its power, independence and self-sufficiency; Muḥammad's nascent community (*umma*) required a similar symbol as a weapon in its struggle with the powerful Quraysh of Mecca. The 'Constitution of Medina' contains explicit evidence that Muḥammad was attempting to redefine the standing of his young community vis-à-vis Quraysh. In two clauses in the treaty (§§23 and 54), Quraysh are singled out as special enemies; more precisely, those Quraysh who had not become 'believers' (*mu'minūn*), 'Muslims' (*muslimūn*) and/or 'emigrants' (*muhājirūn*), as outlined in clauses one and three. Clause twenty-three instructs the idolaters (*mushrikūn*) not to grant any assistance to Quraysh against the 'believers' (*mu'minūn*):

An idolater must not grant protection to a property belonging to Quraysh, nor any person, and neither must he intervene on his behalf against a believer (*wa-lā yaḥūlu dūnahu 'alā mu'min*).⁹³

⁹¹ For example, Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, III, 8.

⁹² Serjeant, 'Haram and hawtah', 47–52; idem, 'Šan'ā the protected', 40–3. See also the perceptive objections raised in Crone, 'Serjeant on Meccan trade', 229–30.

⁹³ Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 29, 125–6. I have followed Lecker's understanding of the phrase *lā yaḥūlu dūnahu 'alā mu'min*; Abū 'Ubayd's recension has rendered this

Clause fifty-four repeats this basic injunction, but seems to extend the warning to everyone rather than limiting it to the idolaters:

No protection must be granted to Quraysh, nor to whosoever assists them.⁹⁴

Lecker suggests that the 'property' (*māl*) referred to in clause twenty-three is probably merchandise. It has been suggested that the encouragement of trade was an important factor behind Medina's *tahrim*, and it would make easy sense to assume that any sacred space at Medina would have facilitated economic transactions, among its other social functions.⁹⁵ This and one or two other possible instances in the 'Constitution of Medina' of the regulation of merchandise and trade, however, provide the only tentative direct evidence for the association of Medina's *ḥaram* with trading activities. That said, trade was an important activity for Muḥammad's followers and so if the *ḥaram* had assisted merchants and traders in their profession then it cannot have harmed its chances of being accepted.⁹⁶

These two clauses suggest that Quraysh were among the most serious opponents of Muḥammad and his followers. The Qur'ān, furthermore, reveals a strong sense of bitterness at the fact that God's believers had been expelled from *al-masjid al-ḥarām*.⁹⁷ It is at least reasonable to propose that Muḥammad established his own *ḥaram* at Medina out of enmity towards those of Quraysh who had not followed him in his new religion – who had in fact expelled him from one sacred space – and a desire to highlight his independence from them. That the Qur'ān also demonstrates that Muḥammad and his followers accorded the utmost respect for *al-masjid al-ḥarām* need not contradict this.⁹⁸ After all, the 'Constitution of Medina' offers no indication that Muḥammad had rejected other *ḥarams* alongside Quraysh. The pre-Islamic Hijāz admitted a plurality of *ḥarams*, and it is possible that any group that fancied itself a powerful regional political player, especially one struggling to gain credibility for a radical new faith, needed the prestige keeping one provided. We should not allow the later reluctance to admit more than one, two or at most three *ḥarams* in Arabia to divert us from this earlier plurality to which there is every indication that Muḥammad himself subscribed, even if the Qur'ān seems to present one *ḥaram* as pre-eminent.

phrase with the simpler *wa-lā yu'īnuhu 'alā mu'min*, 'and neither must he assist him against a believer.'

⁹⁴ Ibid., 30, 174.

⁹⁵ For example, Peters, 'Commerce of Mecca', 18–19; Simonsen, *Studies*, 43–4.

⁹⁶ Crone, 'How did the Quranic pagans', 397–9.

⁹⁷ Q2.217; 5.2; 8.34; 9.19; 22.25; 48.25 (also maybe 2.114).

⁹⁸ As well as those verses in the previous note, see Q2.144; 2.149–50; 48.27.

All of this evidence for the early Muslim community's enmity towards Quraysh introduces a fundamental problem with fully applying Serjeant's '*ḥaram* and *ḥawṭa*' model to the evidence from Medina. There is no clear evidence that Muḥammad's authority to negotiate the declaration of a *ḥaram* stemmed from his status as a holy man from a holy family.⁹⁹ His authority in Medina was undeniably charismatic and he was presumably recognised as a prophet by some or most of those whom the 'Constitution of Medina' calls 'Muslims', 'believers' and 'emigrants', but we need not assume that all the signatories to the document considered him as such at this stage of his career. Furthermore, Muḥammad's wider tribal group of Quraysh is particularly vilified in the 'Constitution of Medina', and it is difficult to imagine him at the same time having justified his authority as a member of this family. Instead, we should consider that as the traditional powers which wielded influence in late antique Arabia collapsed over the course of the sixth century CE, new strategies for structuring societies had to be negotiated. Powerful elites in the Hījāz had built such a strategy based in part at least around the establishment and control of *ḥarams* and, with his actions in Medina, Muḥammad was working within and responding to this structure that he and his contemporaries had come to know so well.¹⁰⁰ It is worth emphasising the fact that the establishment of this *ḥaram* in Yathrib's *jawf* was not simply a by-product of Muḥammad's arrival in the area; the 'Constitution of Medina' reveals the results of a much more complicated process of negotiations.

It remains to establish the location of the *ḥaram* that the 'Constitution of Medina' declared in Yathrib's *jawf*. Before Michael Lecker published his book on the 'Constitution of Medina' in 2004, there was near unanimity on this question. Several *ḥadīths* (which will be discussed in Chapter 3) note that the Medinan *ḥaram* recognised in later centuries was between the two volcanic tracts, and for almost all scholars it made sense to identify the *jawf* in the 'Constitution of Medina' with this area. Because the term *jawf* usually refers to a lower and flatter area of land between higher and rougher expanses, and because many Muslim scholars considered Medina's *ḥaram* to have been in such an area between two volcanic tracts, this identification made perfect sense. Lecker, however, questioned this and argued instead that Medina's *jawf* was a much more restricted area away from the settlements, probably towards the north of the Sāfila, and that this area was declared a *ḥaram* because it was

⁹⁹ See also Crone, 'Serjeant and Meccan trade', 230.

¹⁰⁰ For a similar argument in this vein, see Korotaev et al., 'Origins of Islam'.

economically important.¹⁰¹ The parties to the 'Constitution of Medina', according to this interpretation, wanted to ensure that no one of them came to control it alone. His most important evidence for re-situating the *jawf* comes from combining the following two statements in Ibn Shabba's history of Medina:

The Prophet (ṣ) prayed in the mosque (*masjid*) of the Banū Sā'ida, outside the settled area of Medina (*al-khārij min buyūt al-Madīna*) ...

The Prophet (ṣ) prayed in the mosque of the Banū Sā'ida in the *jawf* of Medina.¹⁰²

Now, there is a caveat here. The two statements could quite plausibly refer to two separate mosques belonging to the Banū Sā'ida. Because the Banū Sā'ida are said elsewhere to have had more than one mosque, this is a real possibility.¹⁰³ No less an authority on Medinan history and topography than 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh al-Samhūdī (d. 911/1506) suggested that these two reports refer to different mosques of the Banū Sā'ida, the first outside of Medina, the second within.¹⁰⁴ I am also not sure that the evidence for the geographical distribution of the signatories to the 'Constitution of Medina' – they seem to have been located across much of Medina – could support the location of this *ḥaram* to the north of the Sāfila without further evidence.¹⁰⁵ The general supposition, however, that we should not automatically assume that the later *ḥadīths* on Medina's *tahrim* and the declaration of the *ḥaram* in Yathrib's *jawf* in the 'Constitution of Medina' refer to the same sacred space is a sound one. The later material about Medina's *ḥaram*, including discussions of its boundaries, are analysed in much more detail in the next chapter, but one point in this regard is worth highlighting here: not a single discussion of Medina's *ḥaram*'s boundaries outside of the 'Constitution of Medina' uses the term *jawf*. There is no explicit identification in any source of any of the boundaries they offer for the *ḥaram* with that term. It is also, of course, possible that the Yathrib referred to in this clause of the 'Constitution of Medina' was the specific settlement in the northwest of the oasis, rather than the area as a whole. Even if we do not accept Lecker's alternative location of Yathrib's *jawf* as fully demonstrated, it makes sense to abide by his caution against equating it immediately with boundaries found in the later discussions.

¹⁰¹ Lecker, *Constitution of Medina*, 165–9.

¹⁰² Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 46.

¹⁰³ Lecker, 'Muḥammad at Medina', 54–5; idem, *Constitution of Medina*, 167–8.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, III, 222.

¹⁰⁵ See note 87.

Muḥammad demonstrably made use of the pre-Islamic Ḥijāzī practice of establishing and maintaining social and economic systems based around sacred spaces known as *ḥarams* to further the cause of his prophetic mission in Medina. That said, he appears to have used different *ḥarams* to different ends.¹⁰⁶ Whilst the Qur'ān suggests that Muḥammad promoted one *ḥaram* away from Medina as religiously pre-eminent, in the 'Constitution of Medina' he created another to help bring stability to Medinan society, to shore up his own support there and to challenge Quraysh. This distinction is important: many later Muslims scholars, as we saw earlier and will turn to in more detail in the next chapter, held Medina to possess a *ḥaram* equivalent to Mecca's, but the evidence of the Qur'ān and the 'Constitution of Medina' cannot support such an equivalency for Muḥammad's own lifetime. The sanctification of Medina and its widespread recognition as a holy city certainly still had a considerable way to go, but during the first decade after the *hijra* the process was firmly begun.

¹⁰⁶ For slightly different observations along the same lines, see Décobert, *Mendiant*, 262–3, 286.

Debating Sanctity: The Validity of Medina's *Haram*

If we have identified some reasons why Muḥammad would have made use of the Ḥijāzī practice of establishing a *ḥaram* – a form of sacred space around which structures of social leadership could be built – at Medina, it is equally apparent that many of these would have become irrelevant quite quickly. In spite of the outbreak of the so-called Wars of Apostasy (*ḥurūb al-ridda*) throughout Arabia during the caliphate of Muḥammad's first successor, Abū Bakr (r. 11–13/632–4), Medina seems to have remained entirely under his control. Such information as our problematic sources for the period provide suggests that although there had been the possibility of a split between the Medinan 'helpers' (*anṣār*) and the Meccan 'emigrants' (*muhājirūn*) over the succession to Muḥammad, the tension was ultimately defused, even if the matter was not resolved to everyone's complete satisfaction.¹ The spectre of internal violence appears to have faded rapidly after the establishment of the Muslim community in Medina. Moments of horrific violence did occur in Medina throughout the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries (and of course beyond) – the murder of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān in 35/656, the Battle of the Ḥarra in 63/683, the events surrounding the Kharijite Abū Ḥamza's occupation of Medina in 130/747–8 and the Abbasid suppression in 145/762 of the revolt of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh the 'Pure Soul' (*al-naḥs al-zakiyya*) – but they were exceptional, not endemic.

The full rehabilitation of Quraysh within the Islamic community also did not take long, and they quickly re-gained their position of prominence

¹ For two rather different approaches, see Madelung, *Succession to Muḥammad*, 28–46; Landau-Tasseron, 'From tribal society'.

in Ḥijāzī politics. By the end of the first/seventh century, perhaps even earlier, Quraysh – the principal enemies in the ‘Constitution of Medina’ – had ensured their control of the caliphal office. There was no longer any need for a *ḥaram* in Medina to help establish Muḥammad’s authority, to maintain unity within the town, or to pose an ideological challenge to Quraysh. Under such circumstances, we might expect Medina’s *ḥaram* to have been forgotten. As things turned out, however, it was not, and a large number of works by Muslim scholars over the succeeding centuries had a considerable amount to say about how it came into existence and why, where its boundaries were and what its rules were; as a result of these discussions, which were largely produced by scholars who lived in very different environments to the Ḥijāz of Muḥammad’s day, the nature of Medina’s *ḥaram* changed fundamentally.² Some of these scholars did, however, actually question whether its continued existence beyond the lifetime of the Prophet was in fact either mandated or necessary. This chapter will investigate some of the debates that accompanied these discussions of Medina’s *ḥaram*. They reveal that Medina’s emergence and acceptance as a sacred space was not only gradual, but also strongly contested from some quarters.

A sacred space is an area closely associated with a divinity, and which is distinguished and protected from outside places by clearly defined regulations and/or boundaries, and I showed in the previous chapter that the *ḥaram* which the ‘Constitution of Medina’ declared in Yathrib’s *jawf* can be considered as such. Medina’s *ḥaram* as it appears mostly in *ḥadīths*, legal works and local histories also certainly fits this definition of a sacred space. Legal scholars, *ḥadīth* transmitters and local historians, at the very least from the late second/eighth century, discussed numerous specific regulations attached to the *ḥaram* at Medina:³ the most common of these prohibited hunting, cutting down plants, carrying weapons and fighting or killing, although there were also several others.⁴ They were

² See also similar observations in Décobert, *Mendiant*, 336–7, 358–9.

³ The available discussions of Medina’s *ḥaram* are too numerous to list in full here; many of them, although by no means all, are offered in the notes that follow. Suffice it to say, the regulation of Medina’s *ḥaram* is a topic which appears in some of the earliest extant works on *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* (for example, ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s and Ibn Abi Shayba’s *Muṣannafs* and various recensions of Mālik b. Anas’ *Muwattaʿa*) and which scholars continued to discuss throughout the pre-modern period.

⁴ One other common regulation in the *ḥadīths* prohibits ‘*ḥadath*’ in Medina’s *ḥaram* and threatens severe punishment to anyone who commits it (*muḥḍith*) or shelters anyone who has committed it. Later Sunnī scholars interpreted *ḥadath* loosely as a synonym of *zulm*, ‘injustice’ or ‘oppression’, or of *bidʿa*, ‘reprehensible innovation’, or of *ithm*, ‘sin’: for

further concerned to define more precisely the boundaries within which those prohibitions applied. There were no strict boundary rituals such as *iḥrām* for entry into Medina's *ḥaram*, although some scholars did come to recommend ablution (*ghusl*) before going to the town.⁵ However, a *ḥaram*'s regulations had to be obeyed at all times, in theory at least, and it was important to establish precisely what they were and where the *ḥaram*'s limits were. For a number of scholars, particularly but not exclusively those associated with the teachings of the Iraqi jurist Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), investigation of such questions led them to conclude that Medina did not in fact, at least by their day, possess a *ḥaram* like Mecca's at all.

The focus in this chapter will be specifically on the concerns of *ḥadīth* transmitters, jurists and Medina's local historians (these categories were not mutually exclusive), starting in the second/eighth century. The actual practical implications of many of their decisions within the wider communities in which they lived and worked are hard to measure. Something will be said about this at the end of this chapter, but it is worth emphasising here that legal discussions and studies of *ḥadīths* have previously been put to good use in investigations of evolving attitudes towards rituals and sacred space, especially Mecca and Jerusalem, and it is time that Medina's sacred space received the same treatment.⁶ It should also be stated from the start that there is no room here to look into all aspects of these scholars' discussions, and instead attention will be restricted to a couple of particular questions which serve to introduce the main issues at stake. The last of these – the fact that some scholars came to question

example, Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, iv, 104; al-'Aynī, *Umdat al-qārī*, x, 326; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, i, 121. This regulation, however, mirrors a clause in the 'Constitution of Medina' (§25), and both Hamidullah and Lecker have interpreted *ḥadath* there as 'murder'. Lecker in particular provided detailed and convincing support for this interpretation in his *Constitution of Medina*, 129–33. Some Imāmī commentators on Medina's *ḥaram* traditions also interpreted *ḥadath* as 'killing' (*qatl*): for example, al-Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, iv, 565. It would appear then that originally this was another rule regulating violence in Medina's *ḥaram*. Ignaz Goldziher interestingly considered the Medinan *ḥaram* traditions prohibiting *ḥadath* to be among the oldest circulating *ḥadīths*, and the lasting debates over the meaning of a crucial word in these *ḥadīths* may support his assertion; see his *Muslim Studies*, II, 26–8.

⁵ This recommendation may have appeared first in Shī'ī (both Imāmī and Ismā'īlī) works; see, for example, al-Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, iv, 550; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, i, 114, 296; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu*, II, 338.

⁶ See especially Kister, 'You shall only set out for three mosques'; idem, 'On "concessions" and conduct', 97–103; idem, 'Sanctity joint and divided'; Hawting, 'We were not ordered'; idem, 'al-Ḥudaybiyya'; idem, 'Origins'; idem, 'Ḥajj'; Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*.

whether Medina had a *ḥaram* at all – carries perhaps the greatest ramifications. However, even among those who accepted that Medina had a *ḥaram* there were serious debates over its nature, and this fact has significant implications for our understanding of Medina's emergence as a sacred space. To demonstrate this, I will first deal with the surprisingly difficult question of establishing where the *ḥaram*'s boundaries actually were.

A BEWILDERING VARIETY OF TOPONYMS?

Although many *ḥadīths* about Medina's *ḥaram* do not provide any indication of its boundaries, and some even allude to boundaries but do not specify them, when they do discuss them the sources provide an astonishing variety of toponyms, more than twenty. Only a few of these are found throughout a wide selection of sources. Many are found solely in Medina's local histories, and several only in Shī'ī (both Imāmī and Ismā'īlī) legal works. Given the wide variety of boundary suggestions, it is not surprising that many scholars ended up unsure of the exact limits of Medina's *ḥaram*.

By far the most commonly encountered definitions of the extent of the *ḥaram* are: between 'Ayr (occasionally spelled 'Ā'ir) and Thawr,⁷ and between the 'two volcanic tracts' (usually *lābatayn*, sing. *lāba*; more rarely *ḥarratayn*, sing. *ḥarra*).⁸ Sometimes one comes across 'two mountains' (*jabalayn*) instead of 'two volcanic tracts',⁹ and very occasionally

⁷ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, ix, 263; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, xiii, 124; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, ii, 363–4 (*Kitāb al-Manāsik*, bāb 95); Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr*, i, 357–8; al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, ii, 486; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-islām*, i, 295; al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, iv, 900–1 (*Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, nos. 467–8); al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, i, 192–3.

⁸ Mālik, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat Yahyā*], ii, 467–8; idem, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat Abī Muṣ'ab al-Zuhri*], ii, 58–9; idem, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat Ibn al-Qāsim*], 69, 414; idem, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat Suwayd b. Sa'id*], 485; al-Wāqidi, *Maghāzī*, i, 22; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, ix, 260–2; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, xiii, 123–5; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, ii, 256, 279, 286, 487; iii, 23; al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, i, 467–8 (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, bābs 1, 4); ii, 221 (*Kitāb al-Jihād*, bāb 71); Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, ii, 1039 (*Kitāb al-Manāsik*, bāb 104); al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, v, 677–8 (*Kitāb al-Manāqib*, bāb 67); Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr*, i, 352–3, 355, 358; al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, ii, 487–8; Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣili, *Musnad*, ii, 58–9, 291; iv, 113; al-Janādī, *Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, 18–19, 43–4, 46–50; *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 405–6; al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-islām*, i, 296; al-Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, iv, 564–5; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu*, ii, 336; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, i, 188–9, 212.

⁹ al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, iii, 502–3 (*Kitāb al-Aṭ'ima*, bāb 28); al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, iv, 898 (*Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, no. 462); al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, i, 189.

across 'two narrow mountain passes' (*ma'zimayn*).¹⁰ These variations are not hard to harmonise. Because 'Ayr and Thawr are widely considered mountains, the two mountains of other traditions can easily be understood to indicate these two toponyms. However, a mountain is not the same thing as a *lāba*, and some commentators felt the need to explain this discrepancy. Abū Zakariyyā' al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) suggested that the two *lābas* were the boundaries of the *ḥaram* to the east and west, and the two mountains were the boundaries to the north and south.¹¹ This is a perfectly reasonable explanation, but the fact remains that the boundaries of the *ḥaram* are never given as between the two mountains and between the two *lābas* in a single *ḥadīth*. Others clearly saw this as a problem, and so suggested that, because the two *lābas* to the east and west of Medina actually joined to the south and (with a little artistic license) the north, the statement 'between the two *lābas*' did provide the boundaries of the *ḥaram* in all directions.¹² The two *ma'zims* were often held by those who discussed them, with a slight alteration of the more usual meaning of the term, to be the exact equivalent of the two mountains.¹³

These attempts at harmonisation may make some sense, but problems persist, as several medieval scholars themselves recognised. Firstly, such harmonisations only appear in commentaries on *ḥadīths* and not explicitly in any of the *ḥadīths* themselves. Secondly, they do not explain why some reports provide boundaries for the *ḥaram* which simply cannot be brought into line with others. The local histories of Medina include a group of traditions in which the Prophet sends the Khazrajī Ka'b b. Mālik to place boundary markers for the *ḥaram* one *barīd*'s distance in each direction from Medina.¹⁴ (The term *barīd* as a unit of distance is discussed further later in this chapter.) Several of the toponyms mentioned in these traditions are far beyond the *lābas* or mountains that surround Medina. To give just one example, a location named in these traditions is Dhāt al-Jaysh. The extant sources are a little confused as to the precise location

¹⁰ Al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, II, 485–6; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 189.

¹¹ Al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, IV, 910.

¹² See, for example, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, *Qirā*, 672; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 191.

¹³ For example, al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, IV, 912; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, IV, 103; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 189–90. Al-Mardāwī also cited this opinion but was sceptical; see his *Inṣāf*, III, 398.

¹⁴ Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 90–1; al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rīf*, 149; al-Marjānī, *Bahjat al-nufūs*, I, 254–5; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 340–2; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 202.

of this place, but Medina's earliest local historian, Ibn Zabāla (d. after 199/814), put it near al-Ḥufayra (or al-Ḥufayr), southwest of Medina on the road to Mecca;¹⁵ in turn, the author of the early fourth-/tenth-century *Kitāb al-Manāsik* and one apparently otherwise unknown Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Asadī have al-Ḥufayr/al-Ḥufayra at six miles beyond Dhū al-Ḥulayfa.¹⁶ Because another of the *ḥaram* boundary toponyms, 'Ayr, is close to Dhū al-Ḥulayfa, it would appear that there is a contradiction here. 'Ayr and Dhāt al-Jaysh are both given in different reports as boundaries of Medina's *ḥaram* to the southwest of the town, but they are apparently in rather different places.

It is worth bearing in mind the possibility that we are not dealing here with contradictory traditions introduced at the same time, but rather with traditions that originally expressed and accommodated changing circumstances. The reports which provide extended boundaries for the *ḥaram* may actually represent a later extension of the *ḥaram* beyond older, narrower boundaries. To reiterate an earlier point, the creation and maintenance of a sacred space should be understood as a gradual process rather than a single event. It is entirely possible that the *ḥaram*'s boundaries were altered several times over the period of nearly two centuries that passed between Muḥammad's death and the earliest extant works which record these *ḥadīths*. Later scholars perhaps then lost sight of this process or simply were not interested in it. As the Iraqi historian 'Abd al-'Azīz Dūrī succinctly put it, 'Jurists are not interested in tracing historical developments, but in formulating ideas and rules.'¹⁷

A further problem is that the toponyms these Ka'b b. Mālik traditions mention are not always the same, and that in at least one version no specific place names are given at all.¹⁸ In fact, traditions about Medina's *taḥrīm* in two of the most renowned collections of *ḥadīths* – by Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/875) – do not actually name the boundaries at all, but instead merely state that 'Medina is a *ḥaram* from such-and-such to such-and-such' (*min kadhā*

¹⁵ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, 1, 205.

¹⁶ *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 440; al-Asadī *apud* al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, 1, 205; cf. Wüstenfeld, *Gebiet von Medina*, 15, who has it at eight miles beyond. On the complex question of the identity of this al-Asadī and the relationship between the material ascribed to him by al-Samhūdī and that in the *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, see al-Jāsir's introduction to his edition of the latter, 267–8; see also al-Sāmarrā'ī's introduction to al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, 1, 37.

¹⁷ Dūrī, 'Landlord and peasant', 98.

¹⁸ Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, xix, 90.

ilā kadhā).¹⁹ It is remarkable that two of the most influential collections of *ḥadīths* included traditions which did not know or, just as significant, care precisely where the boundaries of Medina's *ḥaram* were.

The two mountains, 'Ayr and Thawr, are the most oft-cited toponyms for the boundaries of Medina's *ḥaram* after the two *lābas*; together with the two *lābas* they come the closest to what could be called the 'canonical' boundaries, in the sense that almost all commentaries on *ḥadīths* about Medina's *ḥaram*'s boundaries attempt to reconcile all other toponyms with these. This then makes it particularly significant that according to two well-placed third-/ninth-century commentators, Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī (d. 236/851) and Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838), the inhabitants of Medina did not actually know of a mountain called Thawr.²⁰ Abū 'Ubayd added that Thawr was known as a mountain in Mecca and that Medina's *ḥaram* boundary should rather be Uḥud, the famous mountain north of the town. Both Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī and Abū 'Ubayd were respected scholars in their day and their opinions should be taken seriously; Muṣ'ab himself lived in Medina before later moving to Iraq.²¹ Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) does accuse Abū 'Ubayd of contradicting his own opinion over Thawr, stating that the latter, in a lost *Kitāb al-Jibāl*, did note the existence of a mountain called Thawr in Medina.²² There are, however, a handful of extant traditions which support Abū 'Ubayd's assertion that the boundaries of the *ḥaram* should be 'Ayr and Uḥud, not 'Ayr and Thawr, and at least those attributed to the Medinan Ibn Zabāla predate Abū 'Ubayd's suggestion.²³ Authors of geographical works were also generally ignorant of a mountain called Thawr in Medina, although a mountain so called was often placed in Mecca.²⁴ For

¹⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, I, 467 (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, bāb 1); al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, IV, 898–9 (*Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, no. 463). See also Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Ta'riḫ al-kabīr*, I, 356–7, 359.

²⁰ For a discussion of the issue in general, see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 194–200. Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī's opinion was cited by several later scholars, including al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 348; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 196. Abū 'Ubayd's statement was cited even more commonly by later scholars, but see especially his own *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, I, 315–16.

²¹ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī, *Ta'riḫ Baghdad*, XIII, 112–14; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ*, LVIII, 252–68; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, XXVIII, 34–9.

²² Al-Bayhaqī, *Ma'rifa al-sunan*, VII, 443.

²³ Al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, IV, 910; al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rif*, 149 (citing al-Zubayr b. Bakkr and Ibn Zabāla); Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, IV, 101, and al-Aynī, *Umdat al-qārī*, X, 326; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 195 (citing Ibn Zabāla).

²⁴ This Thawr near Mecca was, perhaps from a relatively early date (late first/seventh century), identified as a cave in which the Prophet and a companion (usually identified

example, Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094), an Andalusī by birth but keenly interested in the topography of the Arabian Peninsula, does not mention a mountain called Thawr in his list of mountains in Medina in his general geographical treatise, the *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-al-mamālik*; in his work specifically on the geography of Arabia, he mentions the Thawr of the Medinan *ḥaram* traditions, but by way of explanation only provides Muṣ'ab's and Abū 'Ubayd's statements that there is no such mountain in Medina.²⁵ 'Arrām al-Sulamī (active during the third/ninth century), a specialist of western Arabian geography, mentions several mountains around Medina, including 'Ayr, but not Thawr.²⁶ As far as I can tell, only during the seventh/thirteenth century did the toponym Thawr come to be attached to a small mountain north of Uḥud.²⁷

Now, the problem of locating all the many toponyms provided in discussions of pre- and early Islamic Medina is well known. The existence of so many little-known toponyms is probably why two local historians, al-Firūzabādī (d. 817/1415) and al-Samhūdī, included in their works substantial alphabetically arranged geographical dictionaries discussing the location of a great many place names.²⁸ The fact that forgotten place names are well attested for Medina (as they are, of course, for almost all regions of the Islamic world), however, should not take away from the significance of the fact that one of the most oft-cited toponyms given as a *ḥaram* boundary was one of them.

We can now state three important conclusions regarding the various *ḥadīths* and discussions about the boundaries of Medina's *ḥaram*. Firstly, there was considerable confusion regarding the exact toponyms which should be used to define the boundaries. Secondly, the precise location of some of the toponyms used in certain *ḥadīths* appears to have been long forgotten by the time other commentators came to discuss them. Thirdly, although the *ḥaram* declared in the 'Constitution of Medina' was situated clearly in Yathrib's *jawf*, this term is never used in any of the later *ḥadīths* about Medina's *tahrīm*. Taken together, these three conclusions are highly

as Abū Bakr) hid from Meccan pursuers during the *hijra* to Medina; see Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte*, 76; cf. Q9.40, and the discussion in EQ, s.v. 'Cave' (J. E. Campo).

²⁵ Al-Bakrī, *Masālik*, I, 408; idem, *Mu'jam*, I, 348–50.

²⁶ 'Arrām, *Asmā' jibāl Tihāma*, 54–5.

²⁷ See the discussion of 'Abd al-Salām al-Baṣrī's (d. 696/1296) verification of the location of Thawr in Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, *Qirā'*, 674; also see quite an extensive overview in al-Mardāwī, *Inṣāf*, III, 397.

²⁸ Al-Firūzabādī, *al-Maghānim al-muṭāba*; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, IV, 104–528.

suggestive: the boundaries of the sacred space at Medina known as a *ḥaram* were sometimes, perhaps frequently, renegotiated and altered over at least the century or so following the drawing up of the 'Constitution of Medina', and, in the later reports and discussions about Medina's *ḥaram*, this gradual process was flattened into a single instance of *taḥrīm*. The *ḥaram* declared in Yathrib's *jawf* may even have been forgotten for a while, later to be resurrected with different boundaries. The implications are considerable: if the *ḥaram*'s boundaries could be renegotiated and altered, why not other aspects of its practice, such as the attached regulations and rites, and the doctrines and explanations used to justify its sanctity? The *ḥaram* in Yathrib's *jawf* may have been a direct ancestor of the sacred space being discussed by the late second/eighth century onwards, but it seems to have undergone a steady process of evolution.

TWO ḤARAMS OR ONE? A ḤARAM OR A ḤIMĀ?

To help elucidate this point, further evidence for this process of evolution and renegotiation can be presented here. Although Medina was usually reckoned as having a single *ḥaram*, some scholars, mostly students of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) or later identified as Mālikīs, suggested that Medina in fact possessed two distinct if overlapping *ḥarams*. One of those who transmitted this opinion from Mālik was his student and Medina's first local historian, Ibn Zabāla:

Ibn Zabāla transmitted from Mālik b. Anas that he said, 'The *ḥaram* [of Medina] is two *ḥarams*: a *ḥaram* of the birds and the beasts from Ḥarrat Wāqim – that is, the eastern *ḥarra* – to Ḥarrat al-'Aqīq – that is, the western; and a *ḥaram* of the plants one *barīd* by one *barīd*'.²⁹

In other words, according to this opinion, a smaller *ḥaram* occupied the area between the two volcanic tracts, in which hunting animals was proscribed, and there was also a larger *ḥaram*, up to one *barīd*'s distance from Medina in every direction, in which the plants were proscribed. We can assume that the two *ḥarams* overlap, and that in the smaller *ḥaram* both animals and plants were proscribed, and also that in this central *ḥaram* at least the other prohibitions concerning fighting and killing applied. This opinion attributed here to Mālik is not explicitly

²⁹ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, 1, 211; see also al-Marāghī, *Ṭahqīq al-nuṣra*, 347–8. For another attribution of this opinion to Mālik which does not go back to Ibn Zabāla, see Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 59.

made in any extant recension of his *Muwattaʿ*, and the later Mālikī Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463/1070) cites the opinion from ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahb (d. 197/812), a famous Egyptian student of Mālik, who is said to have transmitted part of his *Muwattaʿ*.³⁰ According to Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, however, the ultimate source of Ibn Wahb's opinion is not Mālik, but the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99–101/717–20). Ibn Wahb almost certainly did not hear this opinion directly from ʿUmar, and Mālik would be an obvious intermediary, or one of a couple of intermediaries, but the origin of the view is still said to have been the Umayyad ruler, not the Medinan scholar.³¹

It is worth remembering that ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was the governor of Medina for al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 86–96/705–15) from late 86 or early 87/late 705 or early 706 to 93/711–12, during which time we may expect him to have paid keen attention to Medina's *ḥaram*.³² As we will see in Chapter 4, he was responsible for a total overhaul of the town's central mosque during his governorship. As caliph he is reported to have ordered his governor of Medina, Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. ʿAmr b. Ḥazm, to renew the boundary stones (*anṣāb*) of 'the *ḥaram*'.³³ Given the context this could refer to Mecca's *ḥaram*, but Abū Bakr was not ʿUmar's governor of Mecca as well as Medina, and so Medina's *ḥaram* may be more plausible. Furthermore, Mecca's local historians do not list ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz among the rulers who renewed that *ḥaram*'s boundary stones.³⁴ Although this point should not be pushed too far, it is possible that ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was responsible for extending the area of Medina's *ḥaram*. We should keep firmly in mind the idea that the conflicting boundaries given for Medina's *ḥaram* probably arose in response to a gradual evolution in the *ḥaram*'s boundaries over the century following Muḥammad's death, which later scholars collapsed to a single moment of *taḥrīm* during his lifetime. What we are likely seeing in the *ḥadīth* and local historical material on Medina's *ḥaram* boundaries is the synchronisation of an originally diachronic development.

Matters get more complicated still. Although the vast majority of our extant traditions use the word *ḥaram* to describe Medina's protected

³⁰ Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istidhḳār*, xxvi, 38–9.

³¹ On the relationship between Mālik and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, see Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir*, 309–15.

³² Khalifa, *Taʾrīkh*, 311; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, 1182–4, 1191, 1254–5.

³³ Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, v, 364.

³⁴ Al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār*, II, 129–30; al-Fākihī, *Akhhbār Makka*, II, 273–7; al-Fāsī, *Shifāʾ al-ḡharām*, I, 86–7.

enclave, there is still a significant body of reports which uses the term *ḥimā*. Compare, for example, the following two reports, both taken from Ibn al-Najjār's (d. 643/1245) local history, but based on traditions circulating centuries earlier:

The Prophet made Medina a *ḥimā* one *barīd* in all directions. Its trees cannot be beaten or lopped except for what is used to drive camels.

Ka'b b. Mālik said, 'The Prophet made the trees of Medina *ḥarām* one *barīd* in all directions. He sent me and I marked out the *ḥaram* on the raised ground (*sharaf*) at Dhāt al-Jaysh, on Mushayrif, on the heights (*ashraf*) of al-Mujtahar, and on Yat(a)m.³⁵

In spite of the assumptions of some scholars that the terms *ḥaram* and *ḥimā* could simply refer to the same practice, I would see the distinction as more revealing. As we saw in Chapter 1, the two words denoted significantly different practices of enclosing and protecting space in the Hijāz on the eve of Muḥammad's career, as they did for many Muslim commentators. It would be remarkable, therefore, if in this one instance they had meant more or less the same thing.

Those *ḥadīths* which talk of a *ḥimā* instead of a *ḥaram* are fairly regular in their contents. Where they provide details concerning the boundaries and regulations of the *ḥimā*, they usually set its limits at one *barīd*'s distance in all directions from Medina – although they do disagree over the exact locations of the boundary markers placed at this distance – and the only rule that goes with them concerns the protection of plants.³⁶ Compared to the frequent variation displayed by other groups of traditions concerning Medina's *ḥaram*, this uniformity is quite striking. In light of this, it is possible that the doctrine of a 'dual *ḥaram*' ascribed to Mālik b. Anas might not once have been too far off the mark. Might Medina at some point have had a smaller *ḥaram* covering the area roughly between the surrounding volcanic tracts and complete with all the *ḥaram* regulations discussed in the preceding chapters, and a larger *ḥimā* extending

³⁵ Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 88, 90–1. There are several alternative spellings of the name of this place, which some sources have as a hill to the east of Medina, including Tayt, Tayam, Thayb, Tayb, Thay'ab, Taym, Yātib and Yathīb (all are orthographically reasonably similar in the Arabic script); see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, i, 904; al-Firūzābādī, *al-Maghānīm al-mutāba*, 77; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, i, 208–9; iv, 188; Lecker, *Banū Sulaym*, 5.

³⁶ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, ix, 260–1, 263; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, ii, 279; iii, 393; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, ii, 364–5 (*Kitāb al-Manāsik*, bāb 95); al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, iv, 902 (*Kitāb al-Ḥajj*, no. 472); Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 88; al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rif*, 149–50; al-Marjānī, *Bahjat al-nufūs*, i, 248–9, 251, 254, 256; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 337, 343–5; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, i, 188–9, 201–4, 210–11.

up to one *barīd*'s distance in all directions for which the only regulations referred to the treatment of its plants by grazing animals? In the majority of occasions on which Mālik's 'dual *ḥaram*' concept is invoked, it is emphasised that both spaces were a *ḥaram*, but this could be the result of later debates over the precise status of Medina, a *ḥaram* being more prestigious than a *ḥimā*.³⁷ There may, therefore, have been an attempt to change Medina's wider *ḥimā* to a *ḥaram*. If there were, Mālik would be the *terminus ad quem* for such an endeavour, and it may have been initiated as early as the time of the governorship of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz in the late first/early eighth century. Mālik can of course only be the *terminus ad quem* for the endeavour to upgrade the *ḥimā* to a *ḥaram*, not for any widespread acceptance of the upgrade. As we have seen, traditionists well into the third/ninth century continued to transmit *ḥadīths* which gave Medina a *ḥimā*, and Ibn al-Nadīm (wr. ca. 377/987–8) attributed authorship of a *Kitāb Ḥimā al-Madīna wa-jibālīhā wa-awdiyatihā*, 'Book on Medina's *ḥimā*, its mountains and its *wādīs*', to al-Madā'īnī (d. between 225/839–40 and 235/849–50).³⁸

Further circumstantial evidence hints that the establishment of a *ḥimā* around Medina's more central *ḥaram* should be dated to the early Marwanid period, loosely around the time of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz's governorship. Most of the relevant extant *ḥadīths* state that the boundaries of this *ḥimā* were 'one *barīd* by one *barīd*', or 'one *barīd* in all directions'. From the period of the Umayyad caliphate onwards, the term *barīd* was famously used to refer to the caliphal postal and intelligence service, and Adam Silverstein has demonstrated that the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula did not have to wait until after the conquests to come across this term in this context.³⁹ In Medina's *ḥimā* traditions, however, the word clearly refers to a unit of distance. The lengths given for a *barīd* can differ, across the sources and apparently for different regions of the caliphate, but the most common explanation is that a *barīd* is four *farsakhs*, or twelve miles (*mīl*, pl. *amṣāl*; a *mīl* was roughly two kilometres in the Abbasid period, and perhaps slightly longer in the Umayyad period⁴⁰), and this is

³⁷ One isolated citation exists which suggests that Mālik may himself have taught that the wider protected enclave was a *ḥimā* rather than a *ḥaram*; see Ibn Zabāla *apud* al-Samhūdī, *Waḥā' al-waḥā*, I, 203.

³⁸ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, I/ii, 320. It may be significant that Yāqūt and al-Ṣafadī, in their catalogues of al-Madā'īnī's works, removed the word *ḥimā* from the title which they give: Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb*, v, 316; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāḥī*, xxii, 45.

³⁹ Silverstein, *Postal Systems*, 42–51.

⁴⁰ Elad, 'Southern Golan', 46–8.

what it seems to have denoted in the Hijāz.⁴¹ There is as yet no documentary or poetical evidence which suggests that the word *barīd* was used as a unit of measurement in pre-Islamic Arabia, or in the caliphate for much of the first/seventh century.⁴² It seems to appear in the Hijāz no earlier than the Marwanid period and Medina's wider *ḥimā* may, therefore, have been established around the same time. At least one fourth-/tenth-century Imāmī scholar was also suspicious of the use of the term *barīd* in the traditions about Medina's *ḥaram/ḥimā*. Abū Ja'far al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) preserved a report in which, in the presence of the sixth imām Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 148/765), Ziyād b. 'Abd Allāh is said to have asked the famous Medinan scholar Rabī'at al-Ra'y (d. 136/753) what of Medina the Prophet made a *ḥaram*. When Rabī'a replied, 'One *barīd* by one *barīd*', Ziyād then said, 'But in the time of the Messenger of God – may God bless him and his family – it would have been miles!'⁴³

There exist, then, reasons for suspecting that at some point between the late first/seventh and late second/eighth centuries Medina possessed two distinct types of protected enclave: a *ḥaram*, certainly a sacred space, with all the accompanying regulations, and a *ḥimā*, the latter surrounding Medina up to a *barīd*'s distance with regulations restricting the use of plants in that area. I suggested in Chapter 1 that some pre-Islamic Arabian sanctuaries may have had a more restricted, sacred *ḥaram* and a larger *ḥimā* encircling that *ḥaram*, and with this combination Medina fits the model. Over time, however, this idea of a wider *ḥimā* became much less significant in many discussions of Medina's sacred space, with the focus turning largely to the more central *ḥaram* between the volcanic tracts and the mountains.

DISPUTING SANCTITY?

In spite of all the disagreements over the boundaries, a majority of Muslim scholars came to agree that at least somewhere in and around the town there was indeed a *ḥaram*, complete with meritorious distinctions (*faḍā'il*) and regulations (*ahkām*). Not all reports and scholars mentioned exactly the same regulations, but there seems to have been established a relatively wide agreement that within Medina believers should not hunt animals,

⁴¹ For example, Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 55, 63; Ullmann, *Zur Geschichte*, 41–2; Silverstein, *Postal Systems*, 94. See also *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 468; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 212.

⁴² Silverstein, 'Documentary evidence', 153–61.

⁴³ Al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi*, IV, 564: *wa-kāna 'alā 'abd rasūl Allāh (ṣ) amyāl*.

carry weapons or damage the plant life.⁴⁴ Some scholars, however, even took exception to the basic fact that Medina had a *ḥaram* at all. Given that Medina's *ḥaram* eventually came to be one of the most important signs of the town's sanctity, the evidence of this early dissent is valuable for understanding how the town achieved the status of a sacred space.

The majority of the *ḥaram* disputers (those who either denied the *ḥaram*'s existence or, at the very least, argued that many of its rules were not actually applicable) whose opinions are extant in any detail appear to have been Ḥanafis – or at least came to be thought of as Ḥanafis – but there is some evidence that the adherents of other legal schools supported them in part.⁴⁵ Most scholars adhering to or later claimed by the alternative

⁴⁴ As anyone familiar with Islamic legal scholarship might expect, a range of concessions to these regulations were also offered, but there is no room to discuss these much here; for an overview, see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 217–34.

⁴⁵ For those unfamiliar with the development and evolution of Islamic law over the course of the first four centuries AH, a very brief, schematic outline is provided here. Over the first/seventh and much of the second/eighth centuries, Islamic law was predominantly regional, based to a considerable extent on local customs and the reasoning of particular local experts, perhaps with some degree of input from caliphs, their governors and administrators. Over the second/eighth century, more attention came to be paid to *ḥadīths* reporting the actions and opinions of the Prophet, his Companions and other notable earlier figures. From the end of the second/eighth and over the third/ninth into the early fourth/tenth centuries two important trends took place: the doctrines of some of these regional 'schools' came to be attributed to individual teachers and their circles; and pressure increased to justify established doctrines through reference to *ḥadīths*. In Iraq in particular, but also elsewhere, an obvious tension erupted between the 'traditionist-jurists' ([*fuqahā' min*] *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*), who supposedly based their jurisprudence more on respect for the literal meaning of the textual sources, and those often called 'the adherents of personal opinion' (*aṣḥāb al-ra'y*), who allowed much more room for personal interpretation. (The term 'traditionist-jurists' is borrowed from Melchert, 'Traditionist-jurists'.) Gradually, within Sunni Islam, four particular legal 'schools' (Ar. *madhāhib*, sing. *madhhab*), originally distinguished by – among other things – their incorporation of various earlier regional doctrines and attitudes towards the different possible sources of the law, gained widespread acceptance and came to agree to disagree with each other on certain issues. Each of these four schools traced many of its fundamental doctrines back to particular eponymous founders of the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries and their most famous students. These eponymous founders and their schools are: 1) Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān b. Thābit (d. 150/767 in Baghdad) and the Ḥanafī school; 2) Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795 in Medina) and the Mālikī school; 3) Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820 in Fustāt) and the Shāfi'ī school; and 4) Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal (often simply Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, d. 241/855 in Baghdad) and the Ḥanbalī school. It is always important to bear in mind that the 'classical' situation of the four Sunni schools crystallised only during the fourth/tenth century (although, for the sake of ease I sometimes refer to prominent earlier scholars later claimed by one of those schools as Ḥanafis, Mālikis, etc.) and that before then matters were messier and in certain respects more fractious. For much more detailed works, see among others Schacht, *Origins*; Hallaq, *Origins and Evolution*; and Melchert, *Formation*.

Mālikī, Shāfiʿī and Ḥanbalī schools seem to have accepted the existence of Medina's *ḥaram* and noted the importance of obeying its regulations,⁴⁶ as did Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1065)⁴⁷ and apparently – according to Ibn Ḥazm and/or Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451)⁴⁸ – such early jurists as Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742),⁴⁹ Ibn Abī Laylā (d. 148/765),⁵⁰ Ibn Abī Dhīʿb (d. 159/775),⁵¹ Ishāq b. Rāhwayh (d. 238/853)⁵² and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī.⁵³ The Ḥanafīs' questioning of the existence of Medina's *ḥaram* comes out clearly from the extant sources of the fourth/tenth century onwards. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the Ḥanafī Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭahāwī (d. 321/933) made a clear case against Medina's *ḥaram*, and the Shāfiʿī Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) left little room for doubt that at least some Ḥanafīs of his day denied Medina's *ḥaram*'s existence:

The third regulation [which distinguishes the Ḥijāz from other regions] is that the City of the Messenger of God (s) in the Ḥijāz has a protected *ḥaram* between its two volcanic tracts. It is forbidden to disturb its game or to lop its plants, just as for Mecca's *ḥaram*. Abū Ḥanīfa, however, has declared that permissi-

⁴⁶ For Mālikī texts, see Mālik, *Muwattaʿa* [riwāyat Yahyā], II, 467–8 (*Kitāb al-Jāmiʿ*, nos. 10–13); Saḥnūn b. Saʿīd, *Mudawwana*, II, 211–12; Ibn Abī Zayd, *Jāmiʿ*, 142–3; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istidhkār*, XXVI, 33–43. For the Shāfiʿīs, see among many other works al-Bayhaqī, *Maʿrifat al-sunan*, VII, 437–44; al-Māwardī, *al-Ḥāwī al-kabīr*, IV, 326–8; idem, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, 189; al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, IV, 903–14. The *Kitāb al-Umm*, attributed to al-Shāfiʿī, does not contain an extensive discussion of Medina's *ḥaram*, but it seems to assume the existence of one there (for example, VIII, 85). Elsewhere, opinions on the question are commonly attributed to al-Shāfiʿī, for example in al-Bayhaqī, *Maʿrifat al-sunan*, VII, 438–9. For the Ḥanbalīs, see Ibn Qudāma, *Mughnī*, V, 190–4; XII, 414.

⁴⁷ Ibn Ḥazm, *Muḥallā*, esp. VII, 236–7, 260–3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., VII, 236; al-ʿAynī, *Umdat al-qārī*, X, 326–7.

⁴⁹ On his career and scholarly work, see esp. Lecker, 'Biographical notes'; Motzki, 'Fiqh des-Zuhri'.

⁵⁰ A famous Kufan jurist and *qāḍī*; see *EP*, s.v. 'Ibn Abī Laylā' (J. Schacht). For a *ḥaram ḥadīth* with Ibn Abī Laylā in the *isnād*, see Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Taʾrīkh al-kabīr*, I, 355. There is another *ḥadīth* with Ibn Abī Laylā in the *isnād* in which Muḥammad counsels against calling Medina 'Yathrib'; see 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, IX, 267–8.

⁵¹ Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, XXV, 630–44. For *ḥadīths* on Medina's *ḥaram* with Ibn Abī Dhīʿb in the *isnād*, see al-Wāqidi, *Maghāzī*, I, 22; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, IX, 262; al-Janādī, *Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, 18–19, 44–5, 47–8. See also his opinion on Medina's *ḥaram* as cited by al-Khaṭṭābī, *Maʿālim al-sunan*, II, 223.

⁵² On Ishāq b. Rāhwayh's life and *fiqh*, see *EP*, s.v. 'Ibn Rāhwayh' (J. Schacht); Sectorsky, 'Sunna'.

⁵³ Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī (d. ca. 310/922–3), a jurist later claimed by the Shāfiʿīs but who seems in his own day to have headed a small independent legal school which saw very brief success in Yemen; see Halm, *Ausbreitung der šāfiʿitischen Rechtsschule*, 270, n. 3.

ble (*abābahu*) and has established Medina to be the same as all other [lands] (*wa-ja'ala al-Madīna ka-ghayrihā*).⁵⁴

Before al-Ṭaḥāwī, however, the matter is a little murkier. Unless we can count the *ḥadīths* that state the existence of Medina's *ḥaram* as evidence that some were opposing that idea, the earliest evidence that some scholars had doubts about Medina's *ḥaram* may be a very brief notice in the *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, generally attributed to the famous *qāḍī* of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–93/786–809), Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798), a student of Abū Ḥanīfa, the eponymous founder of the Ḥanafī school.⁵⁵ There is no explicit rejection of the regulations in Medina here, but there is some implicit questioning of their *raison d'être*. After presenting two reports which give Medina a *ḥaram* (the second of these is Mālik's idea of a 'dual *ḥaram*'), Abū Yūsuf added:

Some scholars have said that the explanation (*tafsīr*) for this is that it was only [declared] in order to preserve the acacia trees ('*idāh*), since they are the pasture for the flocks of camels, cows and sheep. It was [also] only [declared] because the sustenance (*qūt*) of the populace is milk, and their need for sustenance is greater than their need for firewood.⁵⁶

Abū Yūsuf, notably, does not deny that Medina has a *ḥaram*, but he does argue that the reasons behind its creation were this-worldly concerns for the economic well-being of its inhabitants and not necessarily because the town possesses any great degree of sanctity.

Another famous student of Abū Ḥanīfa, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. ca. 187/802–3), does not appear to discuss the question of Medina's *ḥaram* at all in any of the extant works attributed to him.⁵⁷ The most noteworthy works in which we might expect to see a discussion of the question but do not are the *Kitāb al-Aṣl* (or *Kitāb al-Mabsūt*), the *Kitāb al-Ḥujja 'alā ahl al-Madīna*, and particularly his recension of

⁵⁴ Al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, 189.

⁵⁵ The identification of Abū Yūsuf as the author of this *Kitāb al-Kharāj* has been challenged in Calder, *Studies*, 105–60, but cf. the subsequent defences of this identification in Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 91–5, and Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 2, n. 3. Given the lack of widespread support for Calder's arguments, it can be best assumed that much of the material in the *Kitāb al-Kharāj* is Abū Yūsuf's, even if a later student put it into its current form.

⁵⁶ Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 59.

⁵⁷ For those works attributed to al-Shaybānī consulted, see the bibliography. Again the attribution of many of these works to al-Shaybānī has been challenged in Calder, *Studies*, esp. 39–66; see also Melchert, 'Early history', 311–24. For a recent defence of the attribution of two works – the *Kitāb al-Āthār* and his redaction of Mālik's *Muwatta'* – to al-Shaybānī, see Sadeghi, *Logic of Law Making*, 177–99.

Mālik's *Muwattaʿa*. There is a possibility that the issue was discussed in al-Shaybānī's *Kitāb al-Aṣl*, but just not in a manuscript which is extant or has yet been edited: the later Ḥanafī jurist Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī (d. ca. 483/1090–1) does include a very brief discussion of the question in his own immense *Kitāb al-Mabsūt*, a compendium of Ḥanafī law based on al-Shaybānī's *Kitāb al-Aṣl*, and it is possible, of course, that al-Sarakhsī's *Mabsūt* preserves much material transmitted by al-Shaybānī but which is otherwise now lost.⁵⁸

For this particular section of al-Sarakhsī's work, however, it may be unlikely that al-Shaybānī was the ultimate source, because it centres around a refutation of the opinion of Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī, who lent his name to the Shāfiʿī school of Sunnī law. Al-Shaybānī and al-Shāfiʿī reportedly had disputations (*munāẓarāt*), but most of these reports seem implausible and surely reflect later doctrinal developments. In a pro-Shāfiʿī example, al-Shaybānī admits that al-Shāfiʿī's teacher and eponymous founder of the Mālikī school, Mālik b. Anas, was more accomplished than his own, Abū Ḥanīfa, in knowledge of the Qurʾān, the *sunna* ('custom', here most likely as established by Muḥammad) and the sayings of the Companions, but not in analogical reasoning (*qiyās*).⁵⁹ Furthermore, al-Shāfiʿī is said to have composed a refutation of al-Shaybānī, the *Kitāb al-Radd ʿalā Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan*, but no work refuting al-Shāfiʿī is attributed to al-Shaybānī.⁶⁰ It is also noteworthy that in one reported encounter, al-Shāfiʿī rebukes al-Shaybānī for disparaging Medina, reminding him: 'It is the Messenger of God's (ṣ) *ḥaram* and his sanctuary (*amn*); God called it Ṭāba, the Prophet (ṣ) was created from it and his grave is there.' Al-Shaybānī ultimately concedes that he did not really mean to say anything bad about Medina, but had only intended to criticise Mālik b. Anas; he does not question the assertion that Medina is a *ḥaram*.⁶¹

The omission of a discussion of the question from al-Shaybānī's recension of Mālik b. Anas' *Muwattaʿa* is particularly strange. It is well known that of the many extant redactions of that work, al-Shaybānī's is the one that differs most from the others.⁶² Other recensions of which either all or a very substantial amount has survived include traditions on Medina's *tahrīm*. Al-Shaybānī's version includes none of these, not even to refute

⁵⁸ Al-Sarakhsī, *Mabsūt*, iv, 105.

⁵⁹ For some disputations, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Ādāb al-Shāfiʿī*, 111–12, 159–67; Dickinson, *Development*, 55–6.

⁶⁰ Melchert, 'Meaning', 277.

⁶¹ Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Ādāb al-Shāfiʿī*, 164–5.

⁶² Dutton, *Origins*, 22–6; Calder, *Studies*, 55–7.

them. In fact, of all the various *ḥadīths* in the other recensions dealing with Medina's distinctive merits (*faḍā'il*), al-Shaybānī's includes only one.⁶³ This may say as much about the transmission of the *Muwatta'* as it does about debates over Medina's *ḥaram*, but given the later widely acknowledged (amongst jurists) Ḥanafī questioning of Medina's *ḥaram*, it remains curious that so famous a student of Abū Ḥanīfa as al-Shaybānī cannot yet be demonstrated to have held an opinion on the issue.

Aside from Abū Yūsuf's brief discussion, the earliest evidence for a Ḥanafī denial of Medina's *ḥaram* comes from a scholar who was heavily opposed to Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers. Near the end of the *Muṣannaf* of the early third-/ninth-century traditionist-jurisprudent Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), there is a fairly long refutation of many opinions purportedly held by the arch-enemy of the early traditionist-jurists, the so-called 'master of personal reasoning' (*ṣāhib al-ra'y*) Abū Ḥanīfa.⁶⁴ One of the sections of this *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā Abī Ḥanīfa* is on the issue of Medina's *ḥaram*.⁶⁵ For each of the questions discussed in this *Kitāb al-Radd*, Ibn Abī Shayba presented a series of *ḥadīths* (not always Prophetic) and concludes by summarising, usually in a brief line, Abū Ḥanīfa's opinion on the subject. The purpose of the *ḥadīths* is to refute Abū Ḥanīfa's opinion. There is no discussion of the various competing methodologies and sources for deriving the law, and it is clear that the *ḥadīths* are expected to speak for themselves. The only line of introduction which Ibn Abī Shayba provides for this *Kitāb al-Radd* states: 'This is what Abū Ḥanīfa says that contradicts the tradition (*athar*) that has come down from the Messenger of God (ṣ).'⁶⁶ On the matter of Medina's *ḥaram*, Ibn Abī Shayba provides nine *ḥadīths*, all of which appear in other third-/ninth-century collections and explicitly state that Medina is a *ḥaram*. He then concludes by mentioning that Abū Ḥanīfa reportedly said, 'There is nothing to it' (*laysa 'alayhi shay'*).⁶⁷ Whether Abū Ḥanīfa really held this opinion himself will probably never be known. The important point is that by the early third/ninth century at the latest at least some of those

⁶³ Mālik, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat al-Shaybānī*], 289.

⁶⁴ For a brief study of the transmission of Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf*, see Lucas, 'Where are the legal *ḥadīth*?', 285, 288–90. The only surviving recension was transmitted by the Cordovan Baqī b. Makhḥad (d. 276/889) and his student 'Abd Allāh b. Yūnus al-Qabrī (d. 330/941–2); Lucas suggests that these two Cordovans established the *Muṣannaf* as a 'fixed form' book, but also notes that all the material in the work seems to have been transmitted by Ibn Abī Shayba.

⁶⁵ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, xiii, 123–5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, xiii, 80.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, xiii, 125.

associated with Abū Ḥanīfa were disputing the existence of Medina's *ḥaram*.

After Ibn Abī Shayba, the next important contributor to the debate over Medina's *ḥaram* was the Egyptian Ḥanafī Abū Ja'far al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933). At least three of al-Ṭaḥāwī's works discuss the question, and the discussions in his *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār* and his *Sharḥ ma'ānī al-āthār* are worth considering here.⁶⁸ It is difficult to know which of these two works al-Ṭaḥāwī compiled first – if indeed he did not continue to work on them at the same time – but we can start with the appearance of the debate in two chapters of the *Mushkil al-āthār*.⁶⁹ The most important point to make here is that in neither of these chapters did al-Ṭaḥāwī expressly deny that Medina is a *ḥaram*; in fact, twice he refers specifically to the '*ḥaram al-Madīna*' and once to the 'the two *ḥarams*' (*ḥaramayn*), clearly intending Mecca and Medina.⁷⁰ That said, he did challenge those who equated Medina's *ḥaram* with Mecca's, and argued that its rules were different (to Medina's loss).

In the *Sharḥ ma'ānī al-āthār*, al-Ṭaḥāwī presented a much more systematic case, interestingly with largely different evidence, against Medina's *ḥaram*, and in this work he comes much closer than in the *Mushkil al-āthār* to stating that Medina should not be considered a *ḥaram* at all.⁷¹ This 'chapter on Medina's game' (*bāb fī ṣayd al-Madīna*) starts with a list of twenty-five *ḥadīths*, all of which suggest that Medina is a *ḥaram* with very specific rules comparable to Mecca. Al-Ṭaḥāwī notes that some scholars use these *ḥadīths* to argue that Medina had a *ḥaram* like Mecca's, but he then dedicates a considerable amount of space to arguing against this position. Some of the argumentation here is familiar from the *Mushkil al-āthār*, but what is strikingly new in the *Ma'ānī al-āthār* is an appeal to other *ḥadīths* which, according to al-Ṭaḥāwī, contradict those who state that Medina has a *ḥaram* with rules governing its plants and wildlife.

Firstly, al-Ṭaḥāwī adduced *ḥadīths* in which the Prophet forbade the destruction of Medina's pre-Islamic tower houses (*ātām*, sing. *uṭum*) because 'they are the adornment (*zīna*) of Medina'. He suggested that the restrictions which in the Prophet's day governed the town's flora and fauna were likewise only to keep Medina looking pleasant so that the

⁶⁸ On these two works and their relationship to one another, see Calder, *Studies*, 228–33, 235–41. The third discussion is in al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā*, 57–8.

⁶⁹ Al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-āthār*, VIII, 176–81; XII, 278–89.

⁷⁰ Ibid., VIII, 181; XII, 288.

⁷¹ Al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ ma'ānī al-āthār*, IV, 191–6.

Meccan émigrés there would come to like it, and not because Medina had a *ḥaram* like Mecca's. Secondly, al-Ṭahāwī presented three groups of *ḥadīths* which could be taken to demonstrate that the Prophet himself disobeyed any supposed *ḥaram* regulations in Medina. In one of these the Prophet appears to have allowed a boy in Medina to keep captive a *mughayr*, a small sparrow-like bird with a red beak; in another, the Prophet's wife 'Ā'isha reports that his family in Medina had kept a wild animal (*waḥsh*); and in a third, when Salama b. al-Akwa' returned from an unsuccessful hunt near the Wādī Qanāt the Prophet suggested he go hunting in the Wādī al-'Aqīq instead.

The conclusion to this discussion is particularly interesting because it is here that al-Ṭahāwī most explicitly challenges the very existence of a *ḥaram* in Medina, and very clearly associates his position with the nascent Hanafī *madhhab*:

As for rationally investigating the regulation of that (*wa-ammā ḥukm dhālika min ṭarīq al-naẓar*), we have seen that Mecca is a *ḥaram*, and its game and plants likewise. There is no dispute concerning this among the Muslims. Moreover we have seen that whoever intends to enter Mecca cannot do so unless he is in *ihṛām*;⁷² entry into the *ḥaram* is not permissible to anyone who is *ḥalāl* [i.e. not in *ihṛām*], the *ḥurma* of its game and plants being like its *ḥurma* in itself. Then we considered Medina. Everyone has agreed that there is nothing wrong with a man entering it while *ḥalāl*, so since it is not *muḥarrama* in itself, the regulation of its game and plants is like its own regulation. Just as Mecca's game is only *ḥarām* because of its *ḥurma*, since Medina is not in itself *ḥarām*, its game and plants are not *ḥarām*. Supported by this is the opinion of those who hold that Medina's game and plants are just like the game and plants of all other regions except Mecca. This is also the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfa, Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad [i.e. al-Shaybānī], may the mercy of God be upon them all.⁷³

Most of the arguments are self-explanatory, but two points in particular are worth highlighting. The first is that although al-Ṭahāwī focused primarily on regulations concerning Medina's wildlife and plants, in the *Ma'ānī al-āthār* at least he does seem to deny that Medina had a *ḥaram* at all, at least since the time of the Prophet. This is certainly the position Ibn Abī Shayba, al-Māwardī and some later Hanafīs ascribed to Abū Ḥanīfa,⁷⁴ and it is how I would interpret the conclusion of his argument. The second is that it is notable both that al-Ṭahāwī is using *ḥadīths* to counter the

⁷² The text has *ḥarām*^{an} and not *ihṛām*^{an} here, but the intended meaning is the same.

⁷³ Al-Ṭahāwī, *Sharḥ ma'ānī al-āthār*, iv, 196.

⁷⁴ Al-'Aynī, for example, has Abū Ḥanīfa, Abū Yūsuf and al-Shaybānī (with a couple of others, on whom see further later in this chapter) hold the opinion, 'Medina does not have a *ḥaram* like there is in Mecca'; see his *Umdat al-qārī*, x, 327.

argument of his opponents, but also that he had to be a little creative when finding *ḥadīths* to support his argument. He could adduce no reports in which either the Prophet or any other early legal authority explicitly denied that Medina had a *ḥaram*. Ibn Abī Shayba had thought it enough to refute the nascent Ḥanafī position on Medina's *ḥaram* by using traditions alone; al-Ṭaḥāwī seems to have been responding to that challenge.

In spite of the appeal to the authority of Abū Ḥanīfa, Abū Yūsuf and al-Shaybānī, al-Ṭaḥāwī was likely responsible for this line of argumentation himself, rather than borrowing it from earlier jurists. There do not appear to be earlier 'Ḥanafis' in the *isnāds* of the counter-*ḥadīths* which he cited, and in fact his may be the earliest work which uses these reports in a discussion of Medina's *ḥaram*.⁷⁵ The fact that he utilised quite different arguments in his *Mushkil al-āthār* and *Ma'ānī al-āthār* also suggests that he was experimenting and was happy to drop those arguments which did not seem very convincing, even to himself.

Even if al-Ṭaḥāwī in the early fourth/tenth century was responsible for this line of argumentation, the (proto-)Ḥanafī questioning of the existence of Medina's *ḥaram* can be traced back before him, at least back to the time of Ibn Abī Shayba and perhaps even back to the career of Abū Yūsuf in the late second/eighth century. It does seem, however, that the earlier denial was not based on *ḥadīths*. That the early associates of Abū Ḥanīfa and other Iraqi scholars long held as belonging to the *aṣḥāb al-ra'y* (the group who supposedly based their legal opinions more on personal reason than on the literal reading of *ḥadīths*) did make some use of *ḥadīths* to support their juridical positions – although not nearly to the same extent and in the same way as some of their opponents – is clear now.⁷⁶ However, as noted earlier, there seems to be no evidence that Ḥanafī scholars before al-Ṭaḥāwī were using *ḥadīths* to counter the pro-Medinan position. Over the third/ninth century and under the challenge of traditionist-jurisprudents such as Ibn Abī Shayba, the Ḥanafīs had started to ground their position on Medina's *ḥaram* more firmly in *ḥadīths* and this is reflected in al-Ṭaḥāwī's *Ma'ānī al-āthār*. That al-Ṭaḥāwī was himself responsible for this shift is supported by his well-established role in the so-called 'traditionalisation' of the Ḥanafī school.⁷⁷ It was

⁷⁵ For earlier uses of the *ḥadīth* about the *nughayr*, for example, see Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, 487.

⁷⁶ Schacht, *Origins*, 27–34; Melchert, 'Traditionist-jurisprudents', 389–93.

⁷⁷ Melchert, *Formation*, 48–53, 116–23; idem, 'Traditionist-jurisprudents', 397–8; Calder, *Studies*, 66, 227–33, 235–41. On this 'traditionalisation' in general, see also now Sadeghi, *Logic of Law Making*, 128–40.

al-Ṭahāwī's position and arguments in the *Ma'ānī al-āthār* that became a 'standard' Ḥanafī response to the suggestion that Medina had a *ḥaram* like Mecca's,⁷⁸ although some Ḥanafī scholars did use another line of argumentation, undermining the Median *ḥaram* traditions by questioning how widespread they actually were.⁷⁹

Although the evidence for the juristic rulings of other scholars not claimed by one of the classical *madhhabs* is thin, it seems that the Ḥanafīs were not quite alone in their questioning of Medina's *ḥaram* and its regulations. Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī attributed a similar position to the second-/eighth-century jurists Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) and 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797).⁸⁰ Unfortunately, far too little is known about the doctrines of Sufyān al-Thawrī and Ibn al-Mubārak to discuss them here; there are no relevant *ḥadīths* on the subject in Ibn al-Mubārak's extant *Musnad*,⁸¹ and Sufyān al-Thawrī actually appears in an important position in several *isnāds* (as a 'partial common link') for one group of *ḥadīths* in which Medina is declared a *ḥaram*.⁸² Most scholars of the second and third/eighth and ninth centuries have not left opinions on the question, at least not ones which are particularly clear. It has already been shown, for example, that Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām provided the text of the 'Constitution of Medina' (which includes the Prophet's declaration of Medina's *ḥaram*) in his *Kitāb al-Amwāl*, and engaged in a debate about the boundaries of Medina's *ḥaram* in his *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*, but elsewhere he is very insistent on the uniqueness of Mecca's *ḥaram* compared to all other lands and towns.⁸³ Among Sunnīs, as *madhhab* positions crystallised, the Ḥanafīs were against Medina's *ḥaram* whereas the Ḥanbalīs, Shāfī'īs and Mālikīs were in favour of it; before this, however, among those who might be called the 'proto-Sunnīs', it should rather be said that, generally speaking, some traditionist-jurists

⁷⁸ See, for example, al-Sarakhsī, *Mabsūt*, iv, 105; al-'Aynī, *Umdat al-qārī*, x, 326–9, 338. It was also well known to several scholars of other *madhhabs* who wrote refutations of the Ḥanafī position; for example, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī*, iv, 103–4.

⁷⁹ For example, al-Qudūrī, *al-Mawsū'at al-fiqhiyya*, iv, 2122–5 (§ 542); al-Māwardī, *al-Iḥwā' al-kabīr*, iv, 326–7; Ibn Qudāma, *Mughnī*, v, 190–1. Al-Qudūrī (at 2123) also uses Q5.2 ('and when you are not in *ihram*, then hunt'), noting that because *ihram* is not required for entry into Medina hunting its game cannot be unlawful.

⁸⁰ On Sufyān al-Thawrī, see now Judd, 'al-Awzā'ī'. Ibn al-Mubārak is said to have studied *fiqh* with both Sufyān al-Thawrī and Mālik b. Anas: *EP*, s.v. 'Ibn al-Mubārak' (J. Robson).

⁸¹ Ibn al-Mubārak, *Musnad*.

⁸² This is the group referred to in Chapter 2, note 71; see also Juynboll, *Encyclopedia*, 113–14.

⁸³ Abū 'Ubayd, *Amwāl*, 69–73.

and Medinan jurists were in favour of Medina's *ḥaram*, and that some less traditionalist Iraqi jurists were against it.

There is also evidence for Shī'i opinions on the question. From Imāmī and Ismā'īlī works it would seem that some members of these groups supported the Ḥanafī position halfway: they held that Medina's plants were sacred (*ḥarām*), but not necessarily its game.⁸⁴ Shī'i discussions about Medina's *ḥaram* differ from their Sunnī (and 'proto-Sunnī') counterparts in many ways, and by the time that the extant discussions appeared they were mostly fully committed to the idea that Medina possessed a *ḥaram*, even if not always to the sanctity of its wildlife. Nonetheless, it is interesting that denial of the sanctity of Medina's wildlife remained relatively widespread in Shī'i traditions, and a very small number of traditions actually suggest that some of the early Shī'a may have held even firmer anti-Medina positions. According to a report preserved by Ibn Bābawayh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991–2), the sixth *imām* Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (Abū 'Abd Allāh in the report) was asked by one Yūnus b. Ya'qūb, 'Is what is forbidden to us in the *ḥaram* of God the Sublime forbidden to us in the *ḥaram* of the Messenger of God (ṣ)?' Ja'far replied, 'No!'⁸⁵

This partial correspondence among the Ḥanafī, Imāmī and Ismā'īlī positions is notable and recalls a suggestion that the law of these three schools developed out of a nascent Kufan school.⁸⁶ Following Melchert's convincing argument that many early (proto-)Ḥanafī scholars might actually have had a greater connection with Baghdad than Kufa, perhaps a wider Iraqi (rather than solely Kufan) origin for the anti-Medinan *ḥaram* position should be envisaged.⁸⁷ That Ḥanafī law had close similarities with Imāmī law on other issues, where in general it was in disagreement with the other Sunnī schools, has been demonstrated by Crone (for the *qasāma*, 'oath of compurgation') and Cook (for certain, although by no means all, dietary regulations).⁸⁸

Sometimes adherents of the other three classical Sunnī *madhhabs* came close to the Ḥanafī position on Medina's *ḥaram* and its regulations, particularly when discussing the penalty for infringing Medina's

⁸⁴ Imāmīs: al-Kulaynī, *Kāfī*, iv, 563–5; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu*, ii, 336–7; also see the useful collection of traditions in al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il al-shī'a*, x, 283–6. Ismā'īlīs: al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-islām*, i, 296.

⁸⁵ Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu*, ii, 337.

⁸⁶ Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law*, 20–1; Cook, 'Early Islamic dietary law', esp. 230, 259.

⁸⁷ Melchert, 'How Ḥanafism'.

⁸⁸ Crone, 'Jāhilī and Jewish law', 162–3; Cook, 'Early Islamic dietary law', esp. 259.

regulations. Many, although by no means all, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī jurists came to hold that although Medina was a *ḥaram* with regulations concerning its game and plants, it was not clear that there were any specific punishments for those who violated the regulations. This, incidentally, was in spite of an important group of *ḥadīths*, often featuring the Companion Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, which demonstrated the existence of such punishments.⁸⁹ The situation is briefly summed up, albeit slightly over-simplified, by Medina's local historian Ibn al-Najjār (d. 643/1245), himself a Shāfi'ī:

Scholars are divided over the game of Medina's *ḥaram* and its plants. Mālik, al-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad said that it is proscribed (*muḥarram*), but Abū Ḥanīfa said that it is not proscribed. The transmission from Aḥmad is divergent concerning whether its game and plants warrant a penalty (*wa-ikhtalafat al-rāwīya 'an Aḥmad hal yaḍmanu ṣayduhā wa-shajaruhā bi-al-jazā'*); it is related from him that there is no penalty for that – which is what Mālik said – and it is related that it is warranted. For al-Shāfi'ī there are two stated opinions (*qawlān*) just like the two transmissions [from Aḥmad].⁹⁰ If we say that it is warranted, then its penalty is the loot of the killer, which whoever takes it from him can keep (*wa-idhā qulnā bi-damānibi fa-jazā'uhu salb al-qātil bi-tamallukibi alladhi yaslubuhu*).⁹¹

Some scholars, in their discussions of this question, suggested explicitly that Medina's *ḥaram* is not as sacred as Mecca's in this regard, although they were still firm that it was a *ḥaram*. Many were at pains, however, to emphasise that even if there were no penalty for infringing Medina's *ḥaram*'s rules, this did not make it any less of a *ḥaram*, and al-Samhūdī and Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Ḥimyarī (d. 900/1494–5) even managed to argue that the lack of penalty made Medina's *ḥaram* all the more venerable.⁹² There was at least one non-Ḥanafī scholar who in his discussion of the penalty came very close to the broader Ḥanafī position on Medina's *ḥaram*. In his commentary on Abū Dāwūd's *Sunan*, Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998) – who more frequently than not sided with the Shāfi'īs – stated, 'As for him [i.e. Muḥammad] making Medina

⁸⁹ For example, al-Māwardī, *al-Ḥawī al-kabīr*, iv, 327–8; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istidhḥār*, xxvi, 39–43; Ibn Qudāma, *Mughnī*, v, 190–4; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, i, 217–34.

⁹⁰ Other sources note that one of the opinions – that a penalty was warranted – was al-Shāfi'ī's older, Baghdadī teaching (*fi al-qadīm*) and the other was his more recent, Egyptian teaching (*fi al-jadīd*); see, for example, al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, i, 221–2. On the distinction between al-Shāfi'ī's older and more recent doctrines, see Melchert, 'Meaning', 277.

⁹¹ Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 91.

⁹² Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, i, 168–9; al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Rawḍ al-mi'tār*, 401.

a *ḥaram*, this was only out of veneration for its sanctity without making *ḥarām* its game and plants.⁹³ Crucially, however, al-Khaṭṭābī is still clear that the Prophet did declare Medina a *ḥaram*.

IMPLICATIONS OF DENIAL

We will return later in this book (in Chapter 6) to an analysis of the reasons why some groups of scholars so explicitly opposed the existence of a *ḥaram* in Medina while others were willing to accept it or even eager to promote it. It remains here to confront one final methodological issue. The discussion in this chapter has focused almost exclusively on the opinions, arguments and counter-arguments of jurists and the juristically trained. It should at least be asked how relevant the discussions were to the wider societies within which these scholars resided. Modern historians of Islamic law have often debated how connected the jurists' discussions were to wider developments in society.⁹⁴ At a first glance, any wider impact of the discussions of Medina's *ḥaram* seems to have been extremely limited. Many Ḥanafī scholars may, in juristic writings (and related genres), have expressed serious concerns about assuming the existence of a *ḥaram* in Medina, but not all writers widely assumed to be Ḥanafīs (or proto-Ḥanafīs) seem to have fully shared this opinion.⁹⁵ To give just three examples, the mid-late fourth-/tenth-century Ḥanafī traveller and geographer al-Muqaddasī had no problem declaring, 'What is between Medina's two volcanic tracts is a *ḥaram* just like Mecca's *ḥaram*.'⁹⁶ Another writer with possible Ḥanafī affiliations, 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–9), complained about al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf's raid on Medina's *ḥaram* during the second *fitna* in the late first/seventh century.⁹⁷ A senior Ḥanafī scholar in sixth-/twelfth-century Bukhārā was quite content with being addressed as '*imām al-ḥaramayn*'.⁹⁸ By this time, the term *ḥaram* had come to be used at times to describe specifically

⁹³ Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Ma'ālim al-sunan*, II, 223: *wa-ammā taḥrīmuhu al-Madīna fa-innamā huwa fī ta'zīm ḥurmatihā dūn taḥrīm ṣaydihā wa-shajarihā*. For al-Khaṭṭābī siding with the Shāfi'īs, see Melchert, 'Life and works', 33–4.

⁹⁴ See, for example, the recent detailed discussion in Sadeghi, *Logic of Law Making*, 141–62.

⁹⁵ Disagreements within *madhhabs* are not unusual; see Kaya, 'Continuity and change'.

⁹⁶ Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 82.

⁹⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-nābīta*, 16; he also recognises Medina's *ḥaram* explicitly in his *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, III, 142. For al-Jāḥiẓ's possible Hanafism, see Stewart, 'Muḥammad b. Jarīr', 348.

⁹⁸ Narshakhī (attrib.), *Tārīkh-e Bokhārā*, 4.

the Prophet's Mosque as well as the wider *ḥaram* around Medina, and because the Ḥanafīs did not dispute the existence of the former, it is of course possible that the term *ḥaramayn* in this title was taken as a reference to that.

As might be expected, there are also plenty of examples of the rules of Medina's *ḥaram* being broken. Fighting took place inside the boundaries of the *ḥaram* on several occasions over the first three centuries AH, and many appear to have been killed. Several sources mention that after the Battle of the Ḥarra in 63/683, the Syrian commander Muslim b. 'Uqba permitted his army to plunder Medina and during this many were killed.⁹⁹ After the Battle of Qudayd in 130/747, the Kharijite rebel Abū Ḥamza took possession of Medina. When news arrived shortly afterwards that an Umayyad army had defeated his followers in Wādī al-Qurā, slightly less than two hundred miles northwest of the town around Qurḥ, the Medinans slaughtered Abū Ḥamza's associates who had remained behind.¹⁰⁰ Following the Abbasid seizure of power, Dāwūd b. 'Alī killed many members of the Umayyad family in Mecca and Medina; al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956) even claimed that Dāwūd b. 'Alī killed roughly as many Umayyads, around eighty, as his brother, 'Abd Allāh, had killed in the famous massacre at Nahr Abī Fuṭrus.¹⁰¹ There was fighting within the *ḥaram* during the famous Alid revolt in Medina in 145/762 led by Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan 'the pure soul' (*al-naḥs al-zakiyya*),¹⁰² although the Abbasid caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr reportedly instructed the commander 'Īsā b. Mūsā, whom he dispatched to deal with the rebels, to bear in mind the sanctity of the *ḥaram* there while conducting his forces.¹⁰³ Almost a century later, in 231/845, the populace of Medina massacred prisoners from the Banū Sulaym and the Banū Hilāl whom Bughā al-Kabīr had incarcerated in the Dār Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, 4/1, 327–8; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 298; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 418; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 248.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 2014; cf. Khalīfa, *Ta'rikh*, 393–4; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 406 (the latter is less clear that the fighting occurred within Medina).

¹⁰¹ Khalīfa, *Ta'rikh*, 410; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 422; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 73; al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 329; Robinson, 'Violence', 237–9.

¹⁰² On this revolt, see esp. al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, 2, 507–26; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 444–5, 450–3; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 143–265; Abū al-Faraj, *Maqātil al-ṭālibiyyīn*, 232–99; Nagel, 'Früher Bericht'; Elad, 'Rebellion'; Haider, *Origins of the Shī'a*, 201–4; Bernheimer, *Alids*, 4–6.

¹⁰³ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, 2, 512–13.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1339–41.

Public executions took place within Medina's *ḥaram*, at least during the Umayyad period. When Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab (d. 94/713) refused to swear allegiance to al-Walid and Sulaymān as the caliph 'Abd al-Malik's heirs in 85/704–5, the governor of Medina, Hishām b. Ismā'īl, had him beaten and sent to Dhubāb, 'a mountain pass (*thaniyya*) in Medina where they would kill and crucify.'¹⁰⁵ Dhubāb is north of the Prophet's Mosque, and appears to be within many given *ḥaram* boundaries.¹⁰⁶ 'Umar b. Shabba (d. 262/876) also reports that 'Ā'isha purportedly rebuked Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, Mu'āwiya's governor of Medina, for using Dhubāb as a place for crucifixion. Interestingly, in this report, 'Ā'isha's complaint is not that Dhubāb is within the *ḥaram*, but rather that the Prophet had prayed there.¹⁰⁷

These are only a few of the more notable examples of the violation of Medina's *ḥaram*; it is very hard to know whether the rulers and officials in these examples were ignoring those regulations or were simply not aware of them. Because the regulations attached to many sacred spaces often assist with the smooth functioning of particular social systems, it is only to be expected that groups not entirely happy with those systems would seek to undermine them when they felt they might get away with it. All that said, however, *ḥarams* were a very important feature of the pre-Islamic Arabian sacred landscape and their significance certainly spread with the Islamic conquests. The disputes over Medina's *ḥaram* analysed here demonstrate this; we saw, for example, that al-Shāfi'ī was said to have rebuked al-Shaybānī for disparaging Medina because it was the Prophet's *ḥaram*. Al-Samhūdī expressed his opinion on the importance of Medina's *ḥaram* at length:

Know that what is to be understood from its establishment as a *ḥaram* is the ennoblement of Medina the Noble and its veneration, because of the alighting there of the noblest creature (ṣ) [i.e. Muḥammad] and the diffusion of his radiances and blessings in its land. Just as God Most High established for His House [i.e. the Ka'ba in Mecca] a *ḥaram* to increase its veneration, He established for His beloved and the most magnanimous of creation to Him a *ḥaram* of what surrounded his location [i.e. Medina]. Its regulations (*aḥkām*) are obligatory and its blessings generously bestowed; what can be found there of good, blessing, diffusing radiances, and temporal and everlasting peace cannot be found anywhere else.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., II, 1169.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, III, 200–4; IV, 280–1. There is an Imāmī tradition in which Dhubāb features as a boundary itself: al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi*, IV, 564. For further discussion of this toponym, see Lecker, 'Mulāḥaẓa', 268–73.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 45: *ṣallā 'alayhi rasūl Allāh (ṣ) wa-ittakbadhtahu maṣlaban*.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 214.

Figures with political authority throughout Islamic history have certainly recognised the significance of *ḥarams* as well; such is clear even before some Ayyubid rulers adopted the title *khādīm al-ḥaramayn*, 'custodian of the two *ḥarams*'. Much more will be said about this over the following chapters, but here it can be noted that 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, the Meccan claimant to the caliphal title during the second *fitna*, was known as *al-'ā'idh bi-al-ḥaram*, 'he who takes refuge in the *ḥaram*'.¹⁰⁹ According to a report occasionally found in discussions of Medina's *ḥaram*, while Marwān b. al-Ḥakam was serving as Mu'āwiya's governor in Medina he gave a sermon (*khutba*) in which he mentioned Mecca's sanctity but did not mention Medina's *ḥaram*, and for this the Companion Rāfi' b. Khadij sharply rebuked him.¹¹⁰

Over the centuries, the debates over Medina's *ḥaram* came to focus mostly (although not exclusively) on the perhaps technical issues of its boundaries and the inviolability of the town's (and surrounding region's) wildlife and vegetation. These discussions, however, provide an important insight into the earlier debates which took place concerning the position of Medina in the sacred hierarchy of the Islamic world, and whether it was indeed sacred at all. Analysis of discussions of the boundaries of the *ḥaram* has revealed that while many scholars collapsed the emergence of Medina's *ḥaram* into one historical instance during Muḥammad's lifetime, in reality the process was gradual and involved a considerably greater degree of negotiation among various parties to the process. Perhaps more remarkably, the extant debates on the inviolability of Medina's flora and fauna stemmed from early disputes over whether Medina had a *ḥaram* at all. Those who denied Medina's *ḥaram*'s existence were casting doubt on whether Medina as a whole was really a sacred space at all. In turn, the existence of scholars across the Islamic world who argued against the deniers that the Prophet had indeed declared Medina a *ḥaram* and that its regulations had to be obeyed demonstrates that the town's position as a sacred centre was very important to them. We will confront the causes of this split in Chapter 6, but note here that these debates certainly suggest that Medina's position among the holiest

¹⁰⁹ Hawting, 'Hajj', 35.

¹¹⁰ Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr*, I, 353; al-Taḥāwī, *Sharḥ ma'ānī al-āthār*, IV, 192; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, V, 324; al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, IV, 896 (*Kitāb al-Hajj*, no. 457); al-Marjānī, *Bahjat al-nufus*, I, 247; al-Marāghī, *Taḥqīq al-nuṣṣa*, 13–14.

cities of early Islam – one of the *ḥaramayn*, the ‘two *ḥarams*’, together with Mecca – was not simply an accepted fact among all Muslims right from the start, but rather was the outcome of a series of gradual processes. These took place against a backdrop of dynamic developments both in the evolution of Medina’s landscape and in broader religious, legal and political thought across the early Islamic caliphate. It is to this backdrop that we will now turn.

The Construction of a Sacred Topography

The preceding chapters have largely focused on the emergence and status of Medina's *ḥaram*. We have seen that the *ḥaram* was the paramount form of sacred space in pre-Islamic Arabia and as such was endorsed both in the Qur'ān and by Muḥammad when he decided to establish a form of sanctuary at Medina sometime after his *hijra*. Muḥammad's declaration of a *ḥaram* in the 'Constitution of Medina', however, was not enough to ensure the undisputed continuation of that practice of sacred space after his death, and some Muslim scholars of the first three Islamic centuries – particularly those who were to play an important role in the creation of the influential Ḥanafī school of Sunnī law – deemed its existence and necessity questionable.

Now all this is important because it has much to tell us about the contested process by which Muslims of various sectarian identities came to consider Medina a sacred space; indeed, we are not yet done with the question of Medina's *ḥaram* and will return to it in Chapter 6. Nonetheless, the *ḥaram* needs to be left aside for a while so that we do not lose sight of other aspects of Medina's sanctity. The *ḥaram* was important but by no means the only practice through which Medina's sanctity was expressed and debated. It is crucial to recognise that Medina's sacred landscape was not an empty one:¹ the *ḥaram* there was and is not just covered by

¹ The terms 'landscape' and its relation, 'topography', both of which feature prominently in the following discussion, have been extensively problematised by geographers and anthropologists; for two useful introductory discussions, see Hirsch, 'Landscape', and Ingold, 'Temporality of the landscape'. I deploy both terms in rather loose ways and often as synonyms, so it is worth emphasising that I use them here to refer to somewhere (usually, of course, Medina) that is both an independent, natural space and a place which

date palms and acacia trees between mountains and volcanic tracts, but contained a modest town and a handful of other smaller settlements. People built things within this *ḥaram*, just as they did at Mecca, and it is worth considering how Medina's emerging but contested prestige as a sacred space affected the development of its urban topography and how the latter was given meaning by those who constructed it, both physically by commissioning the building of specific structures, and figuratively by writing about it.

This chapter will demonstrate how Medina's landscape was 'filled in' with sacred sites by scholars who wrote works about them and by caliphs and their governors who built them, a process which complemented its increasingly accepted status as a *ḥaram* alongside Mecca. Put slightly differently, this chapter will begin to investigate how Medina's sacred space became a holy city. Such an examination also complements the earlier discussions in two main ways. Firstly, we find that Medina's sacred landscape was not focused exclusively on Muḥammad's grave, although that landscape was largely constructed around sites associated with his career in one way or another. Secondly, it becomes clear that although many components of Medina's classical sacred topography were in place by the late second/early ninth century, it had taken a while to get there, and the process should be envisaged primarily as a Marwanid and early Abbasid one, not as a Rāshidūn and Sufyanid one.

MEDINA'S LANDSCAPE IN LOCAL HISTORIES

The principal sources for the study of Medina's historical topography are the local histories of the town written over the late second and third/ninth centuries. With the important exception of the manuscript of 'Umar b. Shabba's (d. 262/876) so-called *Ta'riḫ al-Madīna al-munawwara*, these local histories no longer exist and are preserved mostly in later Ayyubid- and Mamluk-era works. By far the most important of these later works is al-Samhūdī's (d. 911/1506) *Wafā' al-wafā bi-akhbār dār al-muṣṭafā*. The three most important of these early histories – by Ibn Zabāla (d. after 199/814), Ibn Shabba and the Alid Abū al-Ḥusayn Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan al-'Aqīqī (d. 277/890) – and the questions of their transmission and preservation were discussed earlier and need not be addressed

people have inhabited and visited and thus interacted with and imbued with meaning. The debt to Pierre Nora's discussion of *lieux des mémoire* here should also be acknowledged; see his 'Between memory and history'.

again here. One reason for these historians' importance is, of course, that their works outlined many aspects of the history of Medina's development from before Muḥammad's *hijra* down to their own times; it is in this capacity that they will be the major source for the analysis in the next section of this chapter. Here, however, we will turn to another use to which they may be put.

In a recent monograph, Zayde Antrim has demonstrated that during the third/ninth to fifth/eleventh centuries, authors of works across various genres operating within what she terms the 'discourse of place' made use of literary representations of urban topography to make arguments about loyalty, belonging and religio-political affiliation.² Furthermore, she builds a convincing case that those authors who wrote about cities not only made use of existing topography in their literary representations, but actively created new urban topographies through their descriptions that could be mapped only to certain degrees upon the physical cities of their own day.³ We should not assume that Ibn Zabāla, Ibn Shabba, Yaḥyā al-Aqīqī and others who wrote about Medina's topography were any different, and so their works, as well as giving us an enormous wealth of information on many aspects of Medina's history, can also be put to use to investigate what kind of landscape they wished to depict. This in turn is highly revealing about the reasons behind Medina's ever increasing sanctity in the eyes of Muslims living throughout the territory of the caliphate.

The first of these three local historians chronologically is Ibn Zabāla and so his *Akhbār al-Madīna* is the best place to start.⁴ The extant citations from this work demonstrate that Ibn Zabāla was interested in many different sites scattered across the area of Medina between the mountains and the volcanic tracts. The largest single topic for which later historians of Medina cited him as a source was the various phases in the history of the construction of the Prophet's Mosque and a number of the individual features within that building, including not only the tomb enclosure (*al-ḥujra al-sharīfa*), but also such objects as the so-called 'standing place' of Gabriel (*maqām Jibrīl*), Muḥammad's *minbar*, the drinking fountains

² Antrim, *Routes and Realms*.

³ *Ibid.*, esp. 61–83. Two recent books have also successfully demonstrated the significance of descriptions of place and the imagination of territory for the history of early Islamic Syria: Borut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir*; Khalek, *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest*; and for al-Andalus, now see also Clarke, *Muslim Conquest*, esp. 69–83.

⁴ For more on Ibn Zabāla's *Akhbār al-Madīna*, see now my 'Writing the history' and 'Prophet's city'.

(*siqāyāt*, sing. *siqāya*) found in the courtyard, the wide, open paved area (*balāt*) outside the mosque and many more. He was also concerned with the fortifications (*ḥuṣūn*, sing. *ḥiṣn*), tower houses (*ātām* or *uṭum*, sing. *uṭum*), residential courts (*dūr*, sing. *dār*) and districts (*manāzil*, sing. *manzil*) of various pre-Islamic groups from the Aws and the Khazraj (later the Prophet's *anṣār*, 'helpers') and of the Meccans who emigrated with and after Muḥammad; Medina's marketplaces; the famous Muslim cemetery Baqī al-Gharqad, to the southeast of the Prophet's Mosque, and the graves of notable figures within; water sources, including wells (*ābār*, sing. *bi'r*), springs and canals ('*uyūn*, sing. '*ayn*) and valleys (*wādīs*); Prophetic and caliphal land grants; places in which the Prophet was either known or believed to have prayed; and more.

Ibn Zabāla's concern, then, appears to have been to identify, where possible locate and describe the history of as many sites as he could connect to the major events which highlighted Medina's role in the salvation history of the Muslim community. Furthermore, these sites were dotted all over the oasis: north, south, east and west. The overwhelming majority of the extant citations from his *Akhbār al-Madīna* focus on those places within Medina's topography that could be connected to the Prophetic career of Muḥammad and, to a much lesser extent, the subsequent activities of his Companions and caliphal successors. We will return later in this chapter to the question of how accurately the landscape Ibn Zabāla and his successors described could be mapped onto Medina's physical topography of the late second and third/ninth centuries, but it is worth stressing here that far from every site described had a tangible presence that Ibn Zabāla and his contemporaries could actually visit. That said, there is a clear concern with fitting Medina's historical topography into that of the late second-/early ninth-century town. To give just one example, in Ibn Zabāla's notice on the column (*ustūwān*) to the south of the Prophet's Mosque known as *al-miṭmār*, which marked the spot from which the Prophet's muezzin Bilāl supposedly recited the call to prayer, he remarked that it could still be seen in the residence (*manzil*) of 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.⁵ Ibn Zabāla was describing an ideal landscape, one in which manifestations of Muḥammad's presence were more visible than in reality, but he was concerned nonetheless to highlight where it could be mapped onto the town of his day. It is worth mentioning here that there is one particularly noteworthy topographical

⁵ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 283.

feature for which later local historians of Medina did not cite Ibn Zabāla as a source: the graves of the martyrs of the Battle of Uḥud, which took place between Muḥammad's followers and the Meccans in 3/625, and in particular that of the Prophet's uncle who died there, Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. This omission is notable because we know from other sources that these graves constituted an important site within Medina's sacred landscape by Ibn Zabāla's day.

Ibn Zabāla's *Akhbār al-Madīna* is unfortunately lost, but a large portion of his apparent student 'Umar b. Shabba's history of Medina is extant. That which survives is divided into three parts, all of which may well be missing sections from the beginning and end. The first part of the extant manuscript is definitely acephalous – it begins at the very end of what was clearly a longer discussion of the Prophet's Mosque – and the last part of it is missing from the end.⁶ Each of the parts has a number of lacunae within as well, although this is most noticeable in the third. The first part concerns the monuments and topography of Medina and the period of Muḥammad's residency there.⁷ Many of Ibn Shabba's concerns are the same as those of Ibn Zabāla, which may not come as a surprise because the latter was thought to have been one of the former's teachers;⁸ that said, Ibn Zabāla is hardly cited at all in the extant *Ta'rikh al-Madīna al-munawwara*, where Ibn Shabba's most common source of information was the Medinan Abū Ghassān Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Kinānī (d. in the decade preceding 210/825–6).⁹ The extant manuscript is, as mentioned, missing most of the section on the Prophet's Mosque, and Ibn Shabba also appears uninterested in certain other subjects important to Ibn Zabāla. Most notably, the *Ta'rikh al-Madīna al-munawwara* displays much less of an interest in Medina's pre-Islamic history than the citations from Ibn Zabāla's *Akhbār al-Madīna*. Ibn Shabba and his principal source, Abū Ghassān, however, were authorities on other subjects,

⁶ That Ibn Shabba's history originally included a larger section on the Prophet's Mosque is suggested by the instances when al-Samhūdī cites him or his major source, Abū Ghassān Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā (d. before 210/825–6), on a topic connected to that structure via another source; see, for example, al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 302, 321–2, for which the intermediary is al-Āqshahrī, *al-Rawḍa al-firdawsīyya*, I, 172–4.

⁷ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 7–344.

⁸ See, for example, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa-al-ta'dīl*, VII, 227; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IX, 115; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, XXV, 64.

⁹ For Abū Ghassān, see, for example, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa-al-ta'dīl*, VIII, 123; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, XXVI, 636–9; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-islām*, XIV, 379; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IX, 517–18. For more on Ibn Shabba's use of Ibn Zabāla's material, see my 'Writing the history', 24–5.

discussions of which are not attributed to Ibn Zabāla. The clearest example of this is the focus in Ibn Shabba's work on the tombs of the martyrs of the Battle of Uhud.¹⁰

The following two parts of the work are much less concerned with local topography, but rather with the caliphates of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13–23/634–44) – a distinct section on Abū Bakr's caliphate is conspicuously absent – and 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (r. 23–35/644–56), especially some of the events leading up to the latter's murder in Dhū al-Ḥijja 35/June 656. The focus is not always exclusively Medinan in these parts; there is, for example, an account of 'Umar's famous journey to Syria.¹¹ It is possible that these two parts may not initially have appeared in Ibn Shabba's local history of Medina, but rather derive from one or more of the other works attributed to Ibn Shabba whose titles are offered in medieval bio-bibliographical sources.¹² From the first, topographical part of the work, which concerns us most here, it becomes apparent that although Ibn Shabba may have made different choices to Ibn Zabāla about what topics to discuss and what material to include (although there is a relatively significant degree of overlap), he was also fundamentally concerned with depicting a landscape for Medina full of sites associated with the Prophet and his Companions. Significantly, this image comes across clearly even though most of the section on the Prophet's Mosque, and indeed any material about the tomb enclosure within, is missing.

The Husaynid local historian of Medina, Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī, also seems to have been intimately acquainted with Ibn Zabāla's *Akhhbār al-Madīna*, probably having studied it directly with its principal known redactor (*rāwī*), the famous Zubayrid family scholar al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (d. 256/870).¹³ Medieval bio-bibliographical sources attribute several works to Yaḥyā, including an *Akhhbār al-Madīna* and a *Kitāb al-Masjid*, with the mosque (*masjid*) in question usually understood as the Prophet's.¹⁴ We can be reasonably confident that these titles both refer to the same,

¹⁰ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 82, 83–6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, II, 23–35.

¹² Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, VII, 344–7; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, VI, 48–9; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wafī bi-al-wafayāt*, XXII, 488–9. The *Kitāb Maqāt 'Uthmān* would be a potential candidate.

¹³ Al-Samhūdī regularly mentions that Yaḥyā used Ibn Zabāla's work as a source (for a significant example, see *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 65), and at least four *isnāds* in the *Kitāb al-Manāsik* (at 365, 367, 369 and 379) have Yaḥyā transmit Ibn Zabāla's information with al-Zubayr b. Bakkār as an intermediary.

¹⁴ For the former, see, for example, al-Sakhāwī, *I'lān*, 274 [= Rosenthal, *History*, 475]; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 424; II, 65, 159; III, 141; V, 27, 61, 107. For the latter, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, II, 412; al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, 212.

now lost work, and this tells us quite a bit about the sacred landscape that Yaḥyā wished to construct for Medina. For one thing, as far as I am aware, no one medieval source credits Yaḥyā with both of these titles. For another, the three extant sources which quote a significant number of reports from Yaḥyā used him as a source for the Prophet's Mosque much more frequently than for any other subject: thirty-two of thirty-three citations in the *Kitāb al-Manāsik* (written at the turn of the third–fourth/ninth–tenth centuries), twenty-four of thirty-six in Abū Bakr al-Marāghī's (d. 816/1414) *Taḥqīq al-nuṣra bi-talkhīṣ ma'ālim dār al-hijra*, and just more than three-quarters of approximately two hundred and eighty citations in al-Samhūdī's *Wafā' al-wafā*. Many of the other citations from Yaḥyā in these works also concern subjects which might reasonably have been included in a work dedicated to the Prophet's Mosque, including a few traditions on Medina's distinctive merits (*faḍā'il*), Muḥammad's *hijra* and death, regulations concerning the pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to the tomb enclosure, and other mosques in which Muḥammad was thought to have prayed.

It seems likely, therefore, that Yaḥyā's *Akhbār al-Madīna* and *Kitāb al-Masjid* were the same work that had come to be transmitted through different recensions. That al-Samhūdī knew of at least two and possibly three different redactions of Yaḥyā's work would support this theory.¹⁵ This in turn suggests that Yaḥyā's constructed topography for Medina was rather different to that of his earlier colleagues, Ibn Zabāla and Ibn Shabba. Whereas their depictions of Medina's landscape certainly did not ignore the Prophet's Mosque and tomb enclosure, they did not fixate on it largely to the exclusion of all else. Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī, however, does seem to have focused more particularly on that monument; if so, this is a rather more radical departure from Ibn Zabāla's model than we see in the topographical section of Ibn Shabba's *Ta'rīkh al-Madīna al-munawwara*.

By the late second/early ninth century, when Ibn Zabāla was penning his *Akhbār al-Madīna* and Abū Ghassān – Ibn Shabba's main source – was either writing a now lost work of his own or transmitting much relevant material in lectures, scholars had fully constructed a sacred topography

¹⁵ The two certain recensions were via Yaḥyā's son Abū al-Qāsim Ṭāhir and grandson Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan/Husayn b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā, known as Ibn Akhī Ṭāhir; see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, i, 155, 424; ii, 239, 256, 314; iii, 215; v, 29. Ṭāhir's recension seems to have been the most widely known to medieval scholars. The possibility of a third recension stems from al-Samhūdī's rather vague juxtaposition of Ṭāhir's redaction with 'another recension' (*riwāya ukhrā*), which could of course but need not have been Ibn Akhī Ṭāhir's; see his *Wafā' al-wafā*, i, 447.

for Medina.¹⁶ It was by then virtually impossible for a Muslim to go to any part of the oasis without being near some spot at which Ibn Zabāla and/or others had placed one or another aspect of Muḥammad's prophetic career. Later local historians – and, to a much lesser extent, geographers and travellers – may have added to and nuanced aspects of this landscape to varying degrees, but the basic template was never thrown out. This is probably only to be expected because Ibn Shabba was certainly a student of Abū Ghassān and apparently of Ibn Zabāla too, and Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī studied with Ibn Zabāla's most important student, al-Zubayr b. Bakkār. The Prophet's Mosque and tomb enclosure – the major public monument of the town, at least after the Marwanid work on the site (discussed further later in this chapter) – may have been the centre of this sacred landscape already in Ibn Zabāla's depiction, but it did not dominate to the near exclusion of all else. It was only by the very end of the third/ninth century, with the work of Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī, that the figurative size of the Prophet's Mosque seems to have grown significantly at the expense of other locations in Medina's sacred landscape.¹⁷

THE SACRED LANDSCAPE OF MEDINA'S PHYSICAL TOPOGRAPHY

To what extent was this literary landscape mirrored by a physical one? Could a visitor or resident in Medina who knew, thanks to Ibn Zabāla and the others, that the region was littered with sites associated with the

¹⁶ There is no firm basis to suggest that Abū Ghassān wrote and/or taught a relatively fixed-form history of Medina as Ibn Zabāla did, but there is some circumstantial supporting evidence. He was descended from a family of scholarly scribes (al-*Aqshahrī*, *al-Rawḍa al-firdawsīyya*, I, 172: *fi bayt kitāba wa-'ilm*), and Tilman Nagel suggested that his material preserved by al-Ṭabarī via Ibn Shabba on the revolt of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh 'the Pure Soul' (*al-naḥs al-zakiyya*) in Medina in 145/762 was likely written; see his 'Früher Bericht', 236–8. He is the source for a number of written documents (see Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 96, 139–41; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 207–15), and Ibn Shabba stated at least twice (*Ta'rikh*, I, 72, 80) that he had found something written on Abū Ghassān's authority which he had not heard him teach in person; a *kitāb Abī Ghassān*, 'piece of writing [book?]' by Abū Ghassān', is also mentioned in Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 365. Taken together, this does suggest that Abū Ghassān at least possessed personal notebooks containing traditions and copies of documents pertaining to Medina's history.

¹⁷ A few scholars writing after Yaḥyā took this tendency of focusing ever more narrowly on the Prophet's Mosque and even just his tomb enclosure even further; for example, a lost *Kitāb Ṣifat qabr al-nabī* is attributed to Abū Bakr al-Ājurī (d. 360/970) in Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, III, 328–9; Ḥājī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zumūr*, II, 1433; Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 193–4.

memory of the Prophet, actually see tangible manifestations of that memory, whether through the survival of original monuments dating back to Muḥammad's career or through the later establishment of mosques and other commemorative structures? If there were such memorialising monuments, who had built them? Answering these questions presents severe difficulties. The most prominent is the almost total lack, for well-discussed reasons, of any material evidence for the area's history. Now this cannot be brushed aside lightly, and it is a great shame that we will never know as much about the urban development of Medina as we will of other early Islamic cities such as Fustāt (so-called Old Cairo) in Egypt and Samarra in Iraq. Pre-modern schematic depictions of some of Medina's holy sites exist – the earliest, an outline of the Prophet's Mosque, may even date to the third/ninth or fourth/tenth century – but as interesting as these are they hardly provide much evidence for analysis alone.¹⁸ Literary texts, especially the local histories discussed previously, are practically our only major sources and, as we have seen, they do not offer neutral, mimetic representations of Medina's topographical history. Nonetheless, such vital questions as these can be answered in part, and in the remainder of this chapter I will utilise material primarily from the local histories of Medina, but also from reports of geographers and travellers among others, to do so as far as possible.¹⁹ Our best evidence concerns the projects and activities in Medina undertaken by the caliphs, their governors

¹⁸ What is probably the earliest known depiction of the Prophet's Mosque appears at the top of a fragmentary paper scroll held in Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, no. 513/4383. The accompanying text contains a few lines praising Medina and encouraging pilgrimage to Muḥammad's grave; it may have been a certificate intended to record an individual's personal pilgrimage to that site. This paper scroll has not been fully published, but images and brief discussions can be found in Meghawry and Saleh, eds., *al-Bardīyyāt al-'arabiyya*, inv. no. 513; Flood, 'Faith, religion', 249–50, fig. 99. Apart from this scroll, the earliest depictions of Medina are probably those among the *ḥajj* certificates found in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus in 1893. The earliest dated certificate is from 476/1084 and the last from 710/1310; illustrations of holy sites in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem began to be added from at least 589/1193. On these certificates, see Aksoy and Milstein, 'Collection'; Sourdel and Sourdel-Thomine, *Certificats*. Bloom has suggested that one of the two buildings represented in the famous frontispiece to a parchment manuscript of the Qur'ān found in the Great Mosque of Ṣan'ā' may be the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, but – as he acknowledges – there is no clear evidence for this; see his *Minaret*, 52–3.

¹⁹ Important accounts of Medina by geographers and travellers down to the end of the fifth/eleventh century can be found in Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 128; al-Jāhīz, *Buldān*, 485–8; Ibn Rusta, *al-A'lāq al-naḥīsa*, 59–78; Ibn al-Faḥīh, *Buldān*, 23–6, 106–7; al-Ya'qūbi, *Buldān*, 312–14; *Kitāb al-Manāṣik*, 359–420; al-Iṣṭakhri, *Masālik*, 18; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣiṭat al-ard*, i, 30–1; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 80–2; Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, vii, 288–90; al-Bakrī, *Masālik*, i, 407–19 (§§686–705); and Nāṣer-e Khosrow, *Safarnāma*, 76–7.

and other associates; the focus in this chapter will, therefore, primarily be on them and organised accordingly. It should be emphasised that this is not meant to be a comprehensive survey of sites known in Medina over the early Islamic centuries; rather a selection has been chosen to highlight some of the main trends in the development of the town's physical sacred landscape.

a) The Umayyads

It is with the Marwanids – or, to be more precise, with the reign of al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 86–96/705–15) – that we have clear evidence for the first time of a reigning caliph who was not based in Medina taking great steps to patronise sites in and around the town. The earlier caliph Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 41–60/661–80) and his long-serving governor of Medina, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, are associated with improving aspects of the town's infrastructure, but there is little sign of a consistent Sufyanid programme aimed towards giving a physical presence to Medina's sacred landscape. Indeed, most of Mu'āwiya's work in Medina seems generally dissociated from the town's sacred topography. He is infamous in the sources, for example, for his attempts to appropriate as much land in Medina and the Hijāz as possible, and many of his other infrastructural works seem to fit into this programme.²⁰ He is often said to have ordered the construction of springs and canals ('*uyūn*, sing. '*ayn*') to aid access to water, presumably for agriculture.²¹ This concern with excavating irrigation canals does not appear to have been philanthropic. Mu'āwiya owned many estates around Medina, and later Islamic law also recognised the building of a well or digging of a spring as one way to claim ownership of otherwise unclaimed and uncultivated land;²² this could have been a major reason behind Mu'āwiya's work in Medina. According to Ibn Zabāla and Abū Ghassān, Mu'āwiya ordered Marwān b. al-Ḥakam to construct the so-called *balāt*, later understood as a wide, open paved area (derived from the Greek *platea*), next to the central mosque.²³ Donald Whitcomb has suggested that because another plausible etymology for

²⁰ See esp. Kister, 'Battle of the Harra'.

²¹ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 86; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 364; III, 330; IV, 165, 402.

²² For relatively early examples, see Abū 'Ubayd, *Amwāl*, 297–313; Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 36–8, 57–8; discussion in Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation*, 31–2.

²³ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 14–15; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 66–81. Abū Ghassān further specified that Marwān gave the job of constructing the *balāt* to his son and future caliph, 'Abd al-Malik.

the word *balāt* derives from the Latin *palatium*, 'palace', Mu'āwiya may have intended to construct an administrative complex next to the mosque in Medina, just as the Umayyads did in Jerusalem south of the Temple Mount.²⁴ This is speculation, but interesting speculation.

One object within Medina with which Mu'āwiya and Marwān are commonly associated is Muḥammad's *minbar* in the central mosque. A couple of sources note that Mu'āwiya – and perhaps already 'Uthmān – had sought to distinguish the *minbar* by providing it with fine, white Egyptian textiles (*qabāṭī*) as a covering, although the best placed local historian, Ibn Zabāla, seems to have thought that Ibn al-Zubayr was the first to do this.²⁵ Mu'āwiya is also widely credited with the attempt – although some sources name 'Abd al-Malik (r. 65–86/685–705) or al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik instead – to remove this *minbar* from Medina, perhaps together with Muḥammad's staff ('*aṣā*'), and transport it to Damascus.²⁶ This attempt was usually assumed to have failed, but refusing to give up entirely the caliph altered the shape of the *minbar* by adding six steps to the original, which had had two in addition to a seat.²⁷ This action, as well as the attempt to move the *minbar* to Damascus, is usually seen negatively by our sources and we have little firm evidence to help us understand why Mu'āwiya or a later Umayyad caliph may have taken such steps. For quite a while now, however, modern researchers have recognised the significance of the association between *minbars* and the exercise of religious and political authority in the early Islamic period, so we can assume that whichever Umayyad caliph undertook either or both acts was attempting in some way to make a point about his own authority.²⁸

²⁴ Whitcomb, 'Urban structure', 18–20.

²⁵ Yahyā al-'Aqlī *apud* al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 119–20; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 92. For Ibn al-Zubayr's covering, see note 30.

²⁶ Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 23–4; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 283; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 92–3; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 82; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 119–22.

²⁷ Ibn Rusta, *al-A'lāq al-naḥīya*, 76; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 283; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 92; al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi*, IV, 554; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 82; al-Bakrī, *Masālik*, I, 411 (§692); Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 159; al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rif*, 72; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣṣa*, 104–5; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 119–22.

²⁸ A classic study is Becker, 'Kanzel'; and for the Umayyad period, see Rubin, 'Prophets and caliphs', 96–7. A very insightful recent article with further bibliography is Fierro, 'Mobile minbar'. For Mu'āwiya's elevation of the *minbar* in Medina, see also Whelan, 'Origins', 216. It may be worth mentioning here that Marwān b. al-Ḥakam is also said sometimes to have introduced a *minbar* into the site of the Prophet's *muṣallā* in Medina; see within Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 87–8; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 125–9.

The Umayyads' great caliphal rival, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr (d. 73/692), who controlled the Ḥijāz during the second *fitna*, also hardly comes across as a keen promoter of any sites in Medina connected to its emerging sanctity. While he certainly seems to have been interested in highlighting his association with Mecca and the Ka'ba, there is little evidence that he wanted to accord Medina a prominent role in his public programme.²⁹ So far as it is possible to tell, Ibn al-Zubayr's widespread acknowledgement as 'he who seeks refuge in the House/ḥaram' (*al-'ā'idh bi-al-bayt/ḥaram*) referred to Mecca alone. There are occasional references to work he undertook in Medina: he may have ordered minor work on the chamber (*bayt*) in which Muḥammad had been buried, and, according to Ibn Zabāla, he also donated fine, white Egyptian textiles (*qabāṭī*) with which to cover the Prophet's *minbar*.³⁰ These are not, however, nearly as prominent as his actions in promoting Mecca's sacred sites, which included a far-reaching renovation of the Ka'ba itself and the surrounding *masjid al-ḥarām*.³¹ In general, in the *ḥadīth* literature Ibn al-Zubayr appears at times as a proponent of Medina's sanctity and at times as an opponent. He does appear, for example, in the *isnād* of a *faḍā'il al-Madīna* tradition in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.³² In 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf*, however, 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 115/733) reports that he heard Ibn al-Zubayr mention that, 'A prayer in *al-masjid al-ḥarām* is better than a hundred prayers in any other mosque', and then added, 'He did not name the mosque of Medina, but I suspect that he certainly meant it'; two other versions reported ultimately from Abū al-'Āliya (d. 90/709) and Sulaymān b. 'Atīq (fl. late first/seventh and early second/eighth centuries) leave no doubt that Ibn al-Zubayr had meant Medina.³³

A clear change of direction in the Umayyad caliphs' policy towards Medina came with the accession in Shawwāl 86/October 705 of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik. This caliph is well known to scholars medieval and modern for his patronage of expensive building projects,

²⁹ The Umayyads also, in their counter-propaganda against Ibn al-Zubayr, invoked the status of Mecca and Jerusalem very prominently and that of Medina hardly at all; see, for example, Madelung, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr'; Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 147–63; idem, 'Why did 'Abd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock?'; idem, 'Abd al-Malik'.

³⁰ See respectively Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 294; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 137.

³¹ Al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār Makka*, I, 201–21; al-Fākihī, *Akhhbār Makka*, II, 159–61; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, II, 309–11; Hawting, 'Hajj'; Robinson, *Abd al-Malik*, 35–9, 95–8.

³² Al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, I, 468–9 (*Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, *bāb* 5).

³³ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, V, 121–2; Kister, 'You shall only set out for three mosques', 188.

including several large mosques, throughout the caliphate.³⁴ As part of this programme he spent a considerable sum of money on overhauling the mosque in the centre of Medina and turning it into a shrine to the Prophet.³⁵ During the work ordered by al-Walīd and undertaken by his cousin and governor of Medina, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, and the latter's agent Ṣāliḥ b. Kaysān – according to Ibn Zabāla this took place between 88/706–7 and 91/709–10³⁶ – the mosque was not only substantially enlarged, but it also seems to have then come for the first time to incorporate the Prophet's grave, for which a lavish enclosure was also built, and acquired a concave *miḥrāb* and four towers (later identified as minarets).³⁷ The sources discuss in some detail (and no doubt exaggerate) the lavishness of this work and the vast sums of money it must have cost. It was perhaps the new mosaics that impressed observers the most. Ibn Zabāla, the earliest detailed source for much information about this project, explained at length al-Walīd's commands to 'Umar, and added that al-Walīd wrote to the Byzantine emperor (*malik al-rūm*) – at that time Justinian II (r. 685–95, 705–11 CE) – asking him to send assistance. The emperor apparently sent 'cargoes (*aḥmāl*) of mosaic and between twenty and thirty craftsmen' (*biḍ'ā wa-'ishrīn 'āmilan*) together with eighty thousand *dīnārs*.³⁸ Ibn Zabāla described the lavishness of the reconstruction:

'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz had [the mosque] pulled down in the year 91 [709–10 CE]³⁹.... He had it rebuilt with ornamented, fitted stones (*bi-al-ḥijāra al-manqūsha*

³⁴ On the context of al-Walīd's building programme throughout the caliphate, see Flood, *Great Mosque*, 184–236.

³⁵ Al-Walīd's (re-)construction of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina has been relatively well studied; see, for example, Sauvaget, *Mosquée omeyyade*; Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 142–9; Bisheh, 'Mosque of the Prophet', 201–48; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 191–6. Some medieval Muslim scholars, including Ibn Zabāla and Yahyā al-'Aqīqī, liked to explain that al-Walīd undertook the expansion of the Prophet's Mosque – and, according to one version, the expansion of other mosques as well – purely as an excuse to evict certain Alids from their homes in prominent positions next to the mosque; for example Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Buldān*, 106–7; Ibn Rusta, *al-A'lāq al-naḥīya*, 67–8; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 80; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 262–4. This is, of course, barely believable, but a revealing story nonetheless.

³⁶ Ibn Rusta, *al-A'lāq al-naḥīya*, 71–2; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 273–4. See also al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1192–4.

³⁷ See especially al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 262–90; Bisheh, 'Mosque of the Prophet', 250–66, 282–90; Whelan, 'Origins'; Bloom, *Minaret*, 49–50.

³⁸ Ibn Rusta, *al-A'lāq al-naḥīya*, 69; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 268–9. The supposed support Justinian II offered also appears in many other sources (with variations in the details); for just one example, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1194.

³⁹ This contradicts the start date of 88/706–7 also offered.

*al-muṭābaqa*⁴⁰) and with gypsum from Baṭn Nakhl.⁴¹ He had it reconstructed with mosaic and marble, and rebuilt its roof with teak and gold-wash (*mā' al-dhabab*). He had the Prophet's wives' apartments pulled down and incorporated into the mosque. He had the clay bricks (*labin*) of the [older] mosque and the apartments taken away and built with them his residential court (*dār*) which is in the volcanic tract.... One of those craftsmen who worked on the mosaics said, 'We made them following a picture of the trees and villas (*quṣūr*) of Paradise that we found.'⁴²

Whether the Byzantine emperor actually sent assistance or not is debatable, probably unlikely, but this does not matter much for our purposes.⁴³ The most important point is that this reconstruction of the mosque in Medina was thought to have been a serious financial investment. Ibn Zabāla elsewhere states that the roof alone had cost forty thousand *dīnārs*.⁴⁴

It was not just the expense and lavishness of the Marwanid (re-)construction that was significant; attention should also be drawn to some of the novel features which 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and Ṣāliḥ b. Kaysān reportedly introduced into the structure. One of these novel features was a 'marker' (*'alāma*) for the so-called *maqām Jibrīl*, 'Gabriel's standing place', which was located by one of the mosque's gateways (the Bāb 'Āl 'Uthmān); what exactly this *maqām* commemorated is rather unclear from second-/eighth- and third-/ninth-century sources, but it was later interpreted as the spot to which Gabriel came to advise Muḥammad to assault the Banū Qurayza.⁴⁵ Another of them was the Prophet's grave itself, now apparently incorporated within the mosque for the first time and provided with an elaborate, sealed enclosure;⁴⁶ this was also the first time, so Abū Ghassān tells us, that the Prophet's grave together with the neighbouring ones of Abū Bakr and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb were properly

⁴⁰ My translation of these terms follows Serjeant and Lewcock, 'Church (al-Qalīs)', 45.

⁴¹ This may be identifiable with modern al-Ḥanākiyya, ca. sixty miles northeast of Medina; see al-Jāsir's comment in *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 365, n. 1.

⁴² Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 269–70. For similar accounts, many of which derive from Ibn Zabāla, see *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 364–5; Ibn Rusta, *al-A'laq al-naḥḥiyya*, 69; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durr al-thamīna*, 176. For a detailed discussion of late antique and early Islamic iconography of Paradise, in which this passage features, see Rosen-Ayalon, *Early Islamic Monuments*, 46–62.

⁴³ See the survey of the debate among modern scholars with further evidence for the sceptical side in Bisheh, 'Mosque of the Prophet', 201–11.

⁴⁴ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 275.

⁴⁵ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 8; *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 397; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 346–8.

⁴⁶ The primary literature on this structure is vast, but two particularly important collections of material are the *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 373–81, and al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 198–206, 297–339. For secondary discussions, see esp. Sauvaget, *Mosquée omeyyade*, 89–90; Kister, 'Sanctity joint and divided', 39–41; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 191–6.

enwalled.⁴⁷ The outside of the new Marwanid tomb enclosure – which was not centred but rather near the eastern wall of the mosque – was pentagonal, with a popular if perhaps fanciful explanation for the shape being that a four-sided structure would resemble the Ka'ba and might be taken as a *qibla* for prayer by the ignorant.⁴⁸ The enclosure had no doorways for entering and indeed ever since its construction in the late first/early eighth century very few people have ever seen inside.⁴⁹

Later sources report that the Marwanid work on the mosque and in particular the tomb enclosure was deeply controversial. Ibn Zabāla and Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī, for example, reported that:

The Prophet's chamber collapsed from the east side, so 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz came together with 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar [b. al-Khaṭṭāb]. He ordered Ibn Wardān to dig out at the foundations, which he did until he raised his hand and turned away anxiously. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz rose up in fright, but 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ubayd Allāh said, 'O Commander! Don't let it scare you! That is just the feet of your grandfather 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. The chamber was too narrow for him, so space was dug for him in the foundations.' 'Umar said, 'O Ibn Wardān! Cover up what I have seen', which he did.⁵⁰

This story and others like it were clearly intended to emphasise the magnitude of what al-Walīd and 'Umar were attempting to undertake in Medina and the concerns their contemporaries held. There is also a well-known *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad curses the Jews and Christians because they take the graves of their prophets as places of worship, which was perhaps a thinly veiled criticism of the Marwanid project in Medina.⁵¹ Ibn

⁴⁷ Al-Āqshahrī, *al-Rawḍa al-firdawsīyya*, I, 172.

⁴⁸ This and similar explanations are cited from Ibn Zabāla, Abū Ghassān and the latter's principal teacher, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Imrān (d. 197/812–13), in the *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 376; al-Āqshahrī, *al-Rawḍa al-firdawsīyya*, I, 172; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 302, 306.

⁴⁹ Someone who did was Abū Ghassān, who explained that he had an opportunity to peer in when the mosque's ceiling broke and exposed the tomb enclosure from the top in Jumādā I 193/February–March 809; his account was cited from a lost section of Ibn Shabba's *Akhhār al-Madīna* by al-Āqshahrī, *al-Rawḍa al-firdawsīyya*, I, 173.

⁵⁰ Al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣṣa*, 128 (just Ibn Zabāla); al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 303. A similar story but with some variations is also reported from 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Imrān in the *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 375. Another story with essentially the same features but involving different characters is told in al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, I, 350 (*Kitāb al-Janā'iz*, bāb 96). For modern discussions, see Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 192–3; Szilágyi, 'Prophet like Jesus', 141–2, 146, n. 55.

⁵¹ For example, Mālik, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat Yahyā*], II, 470; Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, IV, 315–16; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 240; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 366–7; al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, I, 350 (*Kitāb al-Janā'iz*, bāb 96); al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 1834. It is rather interesting that two of the figures most commonly associated with the Marwanid (re-)construction of the Prophet's Mosque and the tomb enclosure – 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and Šāliḥ b. Kaysān – both feature in some separate *isnāds* of this *ḥadīth*.

Sa'id and al-Ya'qūbī relate how two Medinans – Sa'id b. al-Musayyab and Khubayb b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr – explicitly criticised what the Umayyads were doing; the latter even died as a result of the punishment inflicted upon him for his disparagement.⁵²

Now the extent and seriousness of the controversy may have been exaggerated; given the huge cost of the undertaking, al-Walīd and 'Umar presumably expected to gain considerable ideological capital in return. Such anecdotes do, however, highlight the sheer novelty of what the Marwanids were up to in Medina: never before during the preceding eighty years had Muḥammad's grave been so prominently memorialised. There is even a tentative case to be made that it was during the construction work ordered by al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik that the specific site of Muḥammad's burial came to be fixed for the first time. A recent book by Stephen Shoemaker has highlighted how uncertain narratives about Muḥammad's death and burial actually are;⁵³ anecdotal evidence exists to suggest that within Medina the exact spot of Muḥammad's burial was a matter of some controversy. Ibn Ishāq's (d. ca. 150/767–8) narrative of Muḥammad's death, for example, mentions a debate over whether to bury Muḥammad in 'Ā'isha's house (which is the chamber later incorporated into the Marwanid mosque) or with his companions in Baqī' al-Gharqad.⁵⁴ Another report has Muḥammad die not in 'Ā'isha's apartment, but in that of another of his wives, Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh.⁵⁵ With these alternatives in mind, it is noteworthy that a handful of verses in two elegies attributed to Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. before 54/673–4) hint that Muḥammad may have been buried in Baqī' al-Gharqad. One of these reads:

Would that my face could protect you from the earth; would that I were covered before you in Baqī' al-Gharqad.⁵⁶

Yahyā al-'Aqīqī and Ibn Zabāla further recount that when 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz led al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik round the newly constructed

⁵² Ibn Sa'id, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 499–500; VIII, 168; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 339–40; discussed in Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 193. Sa'id b. al-Musayyab's criticism was specifically levelled at the inappropriate opulence of the new Marwanid structure, which would seem to fit in with the probably early second-/eighth-century *ḥadīths* condoning simplicity in mosque architecture studied in Kister, 'Booth'.

⁵³ Shoemaker, *Death of a Prophet*.

⁵⁴ Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, IV, 314; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 1832. See also Ibn Sa'id, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 292–4. Arabic narratives of Muḥammad's death are analysed in much more detail in Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 45–51, 183; Szilágyi, 'Prophet like Jesus'; and Shoemaker, *Death of a Prophet*, 90–117.

⁵⁵ Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr*, II, 39.

⁵⁶ Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, IV, 320 (line 7). The other verses can be found in Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, IV, 319 (lines 1–2); Ḥassān, *Dīwān*, I, 456 (no. 282, lines 29–30).

mosque in 91/710, one member of his family – either his son ‘Abd al-Malik b. al-Walid or his brother Bakkār b. ‘Abd al-Malik – did not know who was in the rather prominent new tomb enclosure and had to ask ‘Umar for clarification.⁵⁷ Finally we might mention that disagreement always existed among medieval Muslims over the precise arrangement of the graves of Muḥammad, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar within the enclosure;⁵⁸ had any of these graves been commemorated straight away after their owner’s burial we might expect more unanimity on the question of their arrangement.

The form which al-Walid’s mosque in Medina took, in particular with its four corner towers, may also have been significant. Corner towers, according to Jonathan Bloom, have a long history in Near Eastern architecture denoting the boundaries of palatial and sacred spaces. Bloom has proposed, therefore, that the new mosque in Medina was designed with its four corner towers to be a ‘palace temple’ to commemorate the Prophet.⁵⁹ Little direct proof supports this suggestion; in fact, because the outer wall of the sacred precinct (*temenos*) that was to become al-Walid’s mosque in Damascus had corner towers, it is possible that we are simply witnessing here the spread of a Marwanid caliphal aesthetic style.⁶⁰ There is also the fact that al-Walid’s brother and successor, Sulaymān (r. 96–9/715–17), had one of the Prophet’s Mosque’s minarets pulled down, reportedly for no other reason than that it overlooked the Dār Marwān in which he was staying;⁶¹ had al-Walid planned the creation of a four-towered shrine to commemorate Muḥammad, his brother does not seem to have realised it. The suggestion is nonetheless plausible;⁶² it also helps to make sense of

⁵⁷ Ibn Rusta, *al-A‘lāq al-naḥḥiyya*, 71; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-wafā*, II, 275.

⁵⁸ *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 376–9; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 81; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 212–13; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-wafā*, II, 309–20.

⁵⁹ Bloom, *Minaret*, 49–54. It is also worth noting in this regard that there is some evidence that by the late second/eighth century at least narrative reports were circulating which drew comparisons between the foundation of the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina and that of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem; see Johns, ‘House of the Prophet’, 103–7.

⁶⁰ There is some uncertain evidence that the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ in Fustāt and Jerusalem’s Temple Mount also acquired four towers during the Umayyad period, although Bloom has downplayed the significance of these structures; see his *Minaret*, 30–9, 54–6; for Jerusalem, see also Kaplony, *Haram*, 281–2. For further examples of close stylistic similarities between the mosques commissioned by al-Walid across his caliphate, see Flood, *Great Mosque*, 192–206.

⁶¹ Ibn Rusta, *al-A‘lāq al-naḥḥiyya*, 70; *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 368; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-wafā*, II, 279.

⁶² It was suggested in Chapter 3 that in the early-to-mid second/eighth century there may have been an attempt to alter the boundaries and functions of Medina’s *ḥaram*, perhaps even to bring the sacred space there in line with a potentially common pre-Islamic set-up. It was also argued there that these actions can be connected to the figure of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. We can add this line of argument here to the circumstantial evidence

the fact that al-Walīd's mosque in Medina was given no fewer than four adjoining towers at a time when such structures are fairly rarely attested at other mosques.⁶³ In any case, it seems as though al-Walīd and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz were, right at the end of the first century AH, the first to provide a shrine for the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina. It is from this time that we can speak of the 'Prophet's Mosque'.⁶⁴

Later Muslim historians certainly thought that al-Walīd and 'Umar were concerned specifically with multiplying the number of sites in Medina connected with the memory of the Prophet through the erection of monuments other than the Prophet's Mosque. It is a common phenomenon that once a 'primary shrine' has been established in a sacred space or holy city, 'secondary sites' begin to develop around it.⁶⁵ As we saw earlier in this chapter, such secondary sites were identified by local historians of Medina. One particularly good example of such places is the many mosques said to commemorate places where the Prophet had prayed.⁶⁶ The locations of many of these commemorative sites were unknown already by Ibn Zabāla's and Abū Ghassān's day in the late second/early ninth century. They were, however, seemingly aware of the locations of at least the following:⁶⁷

§1 The *muṣallā*, to the west of the Prophet's Mosque, where Muḥammad was said to have led prayers during the two 'īds and sometimes to lead the prayer for rain (*istisqā'*).⁶⁸

which supports Bloom's suggestion that al-Walīd and 'Umar were creating a 'palace temple' at Medina, a shrine for the Prophet.

⁶³ That said, the oldest minaret now known from archaeological research – that attached to the mosque at al-Qaṣṭal in Jordan – has been dated to the early second/eighth century; see Bishch, 'Umayyad minaret'; cf. in part Bloom, *Minaret*, 34.

⁶⁴ An argument for the development of other architectural forms intended to commemorate the Prophet during the caliphate of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik can be found in Flood, 'Light in stone'; further support for this comes from Whelan, 'Origins', esp. 214–17. Flood has also suggested that al-Walīd's renovations to *al-masjid al-ḥarām* in Mecca gave that 'a definitive architectural form for the first time'; see his *Great Mosque*, 187–8.

⁶⁵ Turner, 'Center out there', 226; Peters, *Jerusalem and Mecca*, 123–45.

⁶⁶ The most extensive discussion of these mosques is al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 113–256. See also many of the sites discussed in al-Anṣārī, *Āthār al-Madīna*, 80–142; 'Abd al-Ghanī, *al-Masājid al-athariyya*. For a recent discussion of some of the earliest attempts to sanctify particular sites in the Ḥijāz connected to the lifetime of the Prophet, see Muranyi, 'Emergence'.

⁶⁷ For approximate locations of these sites, see Map 2. Locating these sites, and others in Medina, has been made much easier with the help of two previously published maps of the area: Michael Lecker's, which can be found in several of his publications, for example in 'Glimpses', 64–5; and al-Ḥusaynī, *al-Kharīṭa al-athariyya*.

⁶⁸ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 86–94; al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rif*, 120–2; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 115–37; *EP*, s.v. 'Muṣallā' (Wensinck and Hillenbrand); Johns, 'House of the Prophet', 81–5.

§2 The Masjid Qubā' (mosque of Qubā'), approximately two miles south of the Prophet's Mosque, said to have been the first mosque built by the Prophet after his arrival in the oasis after the *hijra*.⁶⁹

§3 Mashrabit Umm Ibrāhīm, southeast of the Prophet's Mosque, where the Prophet's short-lived son Ibrāhīm was born.⁷⁰

§4 Masjid al-Jum'a, slightly northwest of the Masjid Qubā', the location of Muḥammad's first Friday prayer after his arrival in Medina.⁷¹

§5 Masjid al-Faḍikh, a little southeast of the Masjid Qubā', so called according to one story because when, during the Muslims' siege of the Banū al-Naḍir, the Quranic verses that forbade alcoholic drinks were revealed, a group of the *anṣār* were drinking date wine (*faḍikh*) at this site and poured it out on the ground there when they heard.⁷²

§6 Masjid Banī Qurayza, to the southeast of Mashrabit Umm Ibrāhīm.⁷³

§7 Masjid Banī Zafar, of the Aws, probably east of the Prophet's Mosque and north of Mashrabit Umm Ibrāhīm, which apparently contained a stone upon which the Prophet had sat and which in the mid second/eighth century was believed to help women who had difficulty conceiving become pregnant.⁷⁴

§8 Masjid al-Faḥ, on a promontory (*qit'a*) of Jabal Sal', northwest of the Prophet's Mosque and just east of the Wādī Buṭhān, apparently where Muḥammad prayed at the time of the Battle of the Trench in 5/627.⁷⁵

§9 Masjid al-Qiblatayn, another mile or so beyond the Masjid al-Faḥ out to the northwest of the area, where some believed prayers were being performed when the command came to switch the *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca.⁷⁶

§10 Masjid al-Suqyā, southwest of the Prophet's Mosque, where Muḥammad is said to have invoked God to make Medina a pleasing home for the Muslims.⁷⁷ Sometimes this invocation includes the request that God make Medina a *ḥaram*.⁷⁸

⁶⁹ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 31–42; *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 397–8; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 187–8; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 109–12; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 49–55; al-Firūzābādī, *al-Maghānim al-muṭāba*, 323–31; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 424–39; III, 138–66; Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans*, 74–146.

⁷⁰ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 110–12; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 191; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 114–15; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 225; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, esp. 175–7, but also 403–19.

⁷¹ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 49–50; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 112–13; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 167–9.

⁷² Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 50; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 190; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 113; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 222–3; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 169–72.

⁷³ Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 190–1; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 113–14; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 223–5; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 172–5.

⁷⁴ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 47; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 116; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 226; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 177–9.

⁷⁵ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 42–4; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 189; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 117–18; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 228–30; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 181–90.

⁷⁶ Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 190; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 118–19; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 230–2; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 194–7.

⁷⁷ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 52; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 197–200.

⁷⁸ In general, see within al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 198–9; also, for example, see al-Wāqidi, *Maghāzī*, I, 22; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, V, 309; and al-Janādī, *Faḍā'il al-Madīna*, 43.

§11 Masjid Dhubāb, north of the Prophet's Mosque, which is perhaps where Muḥammad set up his camp before the Battle of the Trench.⁷⁹

Both Ibn Zabāla and Abū Ghassān are cited asserting that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, presumably at least with the approval of al-Walīd, ordered the construction of a mosque at all of the known sites at which the Prophet was said to have prayed.⁸⁰ We only have a little evidence, however, for which specific sites such an order might have covered. The (re-)construction of the Masjid Qubā' and the Masjid Banī Qurayẓa from the list just given is explicitly credited by relatively early sources to al-Walīd and 'Umar.⁸¹ 'Umar reportedly had undertaken work on another mosque, the Masjid Banī Ḥarām al-Kabīr, near the Masjid al-Faṭḥ, although it was debated whether Muḥammad had actually prayed there.⁸² More of these mosques – for example, the Masjid al-Faṭḥ – were clearly physical structures by the late second/early ninth century, when Ibn Zabāla and Abū Ghassān were active, but their construction is not explicitly credited to a particular caliph or governor.⁸³ Al-Samhūdī, writing much later, also suggested that the mosque on the site of the *muṣallā* had likely been built by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, and claimed to have identified the Masjid al-Suqyā and the Masjid Dhubāb as 'Umar's constructions also because they were made of 'ornamented, fitted stones' (*ḥijāra manqūsha muṭābaqa*), identified by Abū Ghassān as the 'Umarī style in Medina.⁸⁴

The attribution of the (re-)construction of all these mosques to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and al-Walīd is rather suspicious. For one thing, it is strongly reminiscent of the 'caliph-ordering-everything' *topos* identified by Albrecht Noth and Lawrence Conrad.⁸⁵ The attribution of a monument's construction to a caliph or famous governor could give it an

⁷⁹ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'riḫ*, I, 45; al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rīf*, 122; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 236; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 200–4. For more on the location of Dhubāb, see Chapter 3, note 106.

⁸⁰ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'riḫ*, I, 53; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 224. According to Ibn al-Najjār, al-Walīd expressly ordered 'Umar to do this; see his *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 191.

⁸¹ For the Masjid Qubā', see Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 106; *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 398; and Ibn Zabāla *apud* al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 53, and al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 154. For the Masjid Banī Qurayẓa, see Ibn Zabāla *apud* al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rīf*, 114; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 224–5; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 173.

⁸² Ibn Shabba, *Ta'riḫ*, I, 55; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, I, 366–7; III, 191.

⁸³ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'riḫ*, I, 44; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 228–9; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 183.

⁸⁴ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 122, 200–1.

⁸⁵ This *topos* is well known from Arabic accounts of the first-/seventh- and second-/eighth-century conquests; see Noth and Conrad, *Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, 76–87; Clarke, *Muslim Conquest*, 44, 119–20, 126–31.

extra aura of legitimacy, and we may expect the local historians to have bolstered the prestige of the sacred landscape they were trying to create for Medina by having such notable personalities build in it; al-Samhūdī certainly seems to have been doing something like this when he linked the structures of the Masjid al-Suqyā and Masjid Dhubbāb to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz. Ibn Zabāla actually contradicted his own assertion that 'Umar built all these mosques; he mentioned that at least one of them – the Masjid al-Jum'a – was built by the Abbasid 'Abd al-Šamad b. 'Alī, governor of Medina in the last years of the caliphate of al-Manšūr (r. 136–58/754–75).⁸⁶ It may be the case that al-Walīd and 'Umar were picked simply because their heavy involvement in the reconstruction of the principal mosque in Medina was so well attested.

Some work on these mosques by al-Walīd and 'Umar would, nonetheless, not be entirely out of place.⁸⁷ We have just seen that the Masjid Qubā' is one structure for which an explicit link is made to the two. This mosque eventually came to be one of the two main candidates – the other being the Prophet's Mosque – identified as the 'mosque founded upon god-fearing' (*masjid ussisa 'alā al-taqwā*) mentioned in Q9.108.⁸⁸ Tracing this identification with the Masjid Qubā' back to the second/eighth century is actually quite hard: there is no evidence, so far as I have seen, that such important historians of Medina and the Prophet's life of that time as Ibn Iṣḥāq, Ibn Zabāla and Abū Ghassān made the connection. Because it does appear, however, in the extant redaction of Muqātil b. Sulaymān's (d. 150/767–8) *Tafsīr*, and because Ibn Shabba did connect another part of Q9.108 with the Masjid Qubā', it is likely that the identification was

⁸⁶ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 168. An Imāmī tradition also has Ja'far al-Šādiq note that of all the sites (*āthār*) associated with the Prophet, the Masjid Qubā', Masjid al-Faḍikh and Mashrābat Umm Ibrāhīm were three that had not been altered since his day; al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi*, IV, 561.

⁸⁷ Muranyi offers further evidence that the Marwanid caliphs played a considerable role in the sanctification of sites connected with the Prophet elsewhere in the Hījāz; see his 'Emergence', esp. 169–71. His discussion even suggests that the efforts of the Marwanids in this regard may actually have been viewed as somewhat exaggerated by some of their contemporaries; according to al-Azraqī, *Akhhār Makka*, II, 197, the famous Meccan jurist 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāh (d. 115/733) criticised the Marwanids for establishing a place for prayer at a site near al-Muzdalifa, just outside Mecca, at which the Prophet had merely urinated.

⁸⁸ For an overview of the debate, see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 138–41; also, for example, see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 361–3; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr*, I, 367–8; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, VI, 473–5; al-Firūzābādī, *al-Maghānīm al-muṭāba*, 325–7; Lammens, 'Sanctuaires préislamites', 84–6; and Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans*, 63–4, 78–80.

gaining traction at that time.⁸⁹ It would make theoretical sense at least if one or more figures such as 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz had played some role in encouraging the association.

After al-Walid and the governorship of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, we do not hear much more about Umayyad caliphs and Medina. Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 96–9/715–17) and Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 105–25/724–43) are said to have visited the town in 97/716 and 106/725 respectively, but there is virtually no evidence that they were interested in patronising commemorative constructions there. (They may have done; it is just that there is no evidence preserved.) As we saw, Sulaymān in fact apparently had one of the Prophet's Mosque's minarets pulled down.

b) The Abbasids

The Abbasids may have acted as patrons of sites in Medina from the very start of their rule. Yaḥyā 'al-'Aqīqī claimed that the first Abbasid caliph, Abū al-'Abbās al-Saffāḥ (r. 132–6/749–54), attempted to enlarge and ornament the Prophet's Mosque. He reported that among the inscriptions on the *qibla* wall was one which stated:

The servant of God, 'Abd Allāh, the Commander of the Faithful, ordered the ornamentation and expansion of this mosque, the mosque of the Messenger of God (ṣ) in the year 132 [= 749–50 CE], desiring God's satisfaction and reward, for God possesses the rewards of this world and the next. God is all-hearing, all-seeing.⁹⁰

It was also suggested that Abū al-'Abbās had the so-called *dār al-qaḍā'* in Medina knocked down and added as a new courtyard (*raḥba*) for the Prophet's Mosque.⁹¹ The second Abbasid caliph, Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75), may be more notable in the sources for his repression of the Medinans following their support for the failed revolt of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh 'the Pure Soul' – for example, he closed off the supply of Egyptian grain to the town through the port of al-Jār, as well as cutting off the land route from Syria at Qurḥ/Wādī al-Qurā⁹² – but he too apparently turned his attention to the Prophet's Mosque later in his reign. According to Ibn Zabāla, the caliph's governor of Medina

⁸⁹ Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, II, 196; translated in Lecker, *Muslims, Jews and Pagans*, 89; Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 35–8.

⁹⁰ *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 388; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 291.

⁹¹ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 144.

⁹² Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 224, 257, 280.

from 150/767–8 to 155/771–2, al-Ḥasan b. Zayd, advised him to extend the mosque to the east so that the tomb enclosure would be at the centre, but al-Manṣūr died before he could act on his wish to expand this structure.⁹³ He appears nonetheless to have had at least a couple of inscriptions announcing his work installed. These are preserved within an extensive text of the inscriptions around the Prophet's Mosque cited from Yahyā al-'Aqīqī's lost work by the early fourth-/tenth-century *Kitāb al-Manāsik*.⁹⁴

The third Abbasid caliph, Muḥammad al-Mahdī (r. 158–69/775–85), certainly undertook considerable work on the Prophet's Mosque, probably between 162/778–9 and 165/781–2. According to Ibn Zabāla and Yahyā al-'Aqīqī, he had the main structure extended to the north by one hundred *dhirā'*s (ca. fifty metres), although this is not the only figure given.⁹⁵ As part of this work he had particularly elaborate inscriptions erected around the mosque, and he also purportedly had al-Walid's name in earlier inscriptions replaced with his own, just as his grandson, the caliph 'Abd Allāh al-Ma'mūn (r. 198–218/813–33), was famously to do with 'Abd al-Malik's name on the Dome of the Rock.⁹⁶ When al-Mahdī visited Medina during his *hajj* of 161/778, he also sought to have removed the six extra steps which Mu'āwiya or one of his successors had had added to the Prophet's *minbar* in the mosque, but at the advice of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) he abandoned the idea because it was considered that removing the nails would damage the wood of the original steps.⁹⁷ Al-Mahdī was the last Abbasid caliph who seems to have undertaken particularly

⁹³ Ibn Rusta, *al-A' lāq al-naḥḥa*, 72; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 291–2. For the dates of al-Ḥasan b. Zayd's tenure as governor of Medina, see Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 15; Wakīf, *Akbbār*, I, 224, 227–8; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 358–9, 377.

⁹⁴ *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 394–5. The text of these inscriptions makes interesting reading and is discussed in more detail later, in Chapter 6.

⁹⁵ On al-Mahdī's work on the Prophet's Mosque, see especially Ibn Rusta, *al-A' lāq al-naḥḥa*, 72–5; *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 370–3, 387–95; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 292–6; Sauvaget, *Mosquée omeyyade*, 49–68; Bloom, *Minaret*, 61–2; and Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*, 90.

⁹⁶ The most detailed presentation of al-Mahdī's inscriptions around the mosque, as read by Yahyā al-'Aqīqī, is in the *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 385–95. Ibn Rusta also gave the text of the inscriptions which he could see when he visited in 290/903: *al-A' lāq al-naḥḥa*, 73–5. For al-Mahdī's replacement of al-Walid's name with his own, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 534–5.

⁹⁷ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 15; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 483 (who has al-Mahdī lead the *hajj* in 160/777, instead of 161/778); Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 159–60; al-Matārī, *Ta'rif*, 72–3; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣṣa*, 105; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 122. In Ibn Qutayba (attrib.), *al-Imāma wa-al-siyāsa*, II, 296–7, this anecdote is related concerning Hārūn al-Rashid rather than al-Mahdī.

expansive work on the Prophet's Mosque. Various rulers after him undertook plenty of renovation work, including some very major work after the fires in the mosque in 654/1256 and 886/1481,⁹⁸ but the next serious enlargement apparently came only in 1848–61 CE, during the reign of the Ottoman sultan Abdülmecid I (r. 1255–77/1839–61).⁹⁹

Small bits and pieces of work continued throughout the remainder of the second/eighth and the third/ninth centuries.¹⁰⁰ Hārūn al-Rashīd's caliphate (170–93/786–809), which famously witnessed intense patronage of the sites in Mecca and along the road – the so-called *Darb Zubayda*, named after Hārūn's wife – that linked Mecca and Kufa/Baghdad, saw some modest work in Medina.¹⁰¹ A mosaic inscription, the text of which Ibn Rusta and the *Kitāb al-Manāsik* preserved, mentions a small amount of work undertaken in the Prophet's Mosque at Hārūn's order by craftsmen from Jerusalem.¹⁰² At least two of his governors of Medina – Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Sulaymān al-Rabā'ī and Abū al-Bakhtarī Wabb b. Wabb – are also associated with work in the mosque, but this was mostly repair work, to the aforementioned 'marker' ('*alāma*') for the *maqām Jibrīl* and to the roof in 193/809 respectively.¹⁰³ Ibn Zabāla stated that Hārūn's mother, al-Khayzurān, and her slave-girl Mu'nisa were responsible for having the tomb enclosure perfumed with *khalūq*, a reddish-yellow unguent, when they visited Medina during their *hajj* in 170/787.¹⁰⁴ It was also probably during the reigns of Muḥammad al-Mahdī and Hārūn al-Rashīd that most of the nineteen drinking fountains (*siqāyāt*, sing. *siqāya*), which Ibn

⁹⁸ On these fires, see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 371–83, 413–30; Sauvaget, *Mosquée omeyyade*, 42–3, 46–8; and Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*, 91–6.

⁹⁹ On this enlargement, and the subsequent enormous Saudi expansions in 1949–55 and 1984–94, see Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*, 97–113.

¹⁰⁰ For further details, see Jairazbhoy, 'History of the shrines', 27–32.

¹⁰¹ See esp. al-Rashīd, *Darb Zubaydah*.

¹⁰² Ibn Rusta, *al-A'lāq al-nafisa*, 74–5; *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 389.

¹⁰³ According to Ibn 'Asākir, Hārūn appointed Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Rabā'ī as governor of Medina in 173/789–90; see his *Ta'rikh*, III, 348. Al-Ṭabarī, in his *Ta'rikh*, III, 739, mentions him among Hārūn's governors of Medina, but does not provide any dates for his tenure; see also Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-'arab*, 71. Abū al-Bakhtarī Wabb b. Wabb was governor and *qādī* of Medina from 192/808 until Hārūn's death the following year; see Wakī, *Akhhbār*, I, 243–54. Al-Rabā'ī's work: *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 397; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 347 (citing 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Imrān and Ibn Zabāla respectively). Roof repair work: al-Āqshahrī, *al-Rawḍa al-firdawsīyya*, I, 173; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 323 (citing Abū Ghassān and Ibn Zabāla respectively).

¹⁰⁴ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 350–1; see also *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 372.

Zabāla observed in the mosque's courtyard in 199/814, were built; their patrons are said to have been various clients, officials and relatives of those two caliphs.¹⁰⁵

Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) cited an inscription which he says that he saw and which recorded unspecified work al-Ma'mūn undertook on the Prophet's Mosque in 202/817–18.¹⁰⁶ According to at least one redactor of Yaḥyā al-Aqīqī's work, Abū Ja'far al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–47/847–61) ordered his construction manager in the Ḥijāz, Ishāq b. Salama, to line the tomb enclosure with marble, and in Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's (d. 328/940) description, for what it is worth, the enclosure was surrounded by marble up to above the height of a man.¹⁰⁷ Further unspecified renovation work by Abū al-'Abbās al-Mu'taḍid (r. 279–89/892–902) in 282/895–6 is reported in the text of an inscription,¹⁰⁸ and Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094) had Ja'far al-Muqtadir (r. 295–320/908–32) send gates of Indian teak (*abwāb al-sāj*) there.¹⁰⁹

The Abbasid caliphs' patronage of sacred sites in Medina was, like the Umayyads', far from restricted to the Prophet's Mosque. I mentioned earlier that Ibn Zabāla attributed the construction of the Maṣjid al-Jum'a to al-Manṣūr's governor, 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. 'Alī. I also noted earlier that for some local historians of Medina the graves of the martyrs of the Battle of Uḥud were a particularly crucial part of the area's sacred landscape. By 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Imrān's time in the late second/early ninth century a mosque (*maṣjid*) stood over the grave of the most famous of those martyrs, the Prophet's uncle Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib; the existence of a mosque at this site was also noted in the

¹⁰⁵ Ibn Rusta, *al-A'lāq al-nafisa*, 75; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 181–2; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 470.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 562–3; also cited in al-Bakrī, *Masālik*, I, 410 (§690); al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 86; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 296. Ibn Qutayba speaks of al-Ma'mūn's 'enlargement' (*ziyāda*) of the mosque, but because the inscription mentions only unspecified 'building work' (*'imāra*), al-Marāghī and al-Samhūdī quite reasonably doubted the accuracy of this assumption.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, VII, 289; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 338. The veracity of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's claim to offer an eyewitness description of the Prophet's Mosque has been questioned in Khoury, 'Meaning', but partially defended in Flood, *Great Mosque*, 193–4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Rusta, *al-A'lāq al-nafisa*, 74. Abū Bakr al-Sūlī (d. 335/947) suggested that al-Mu'taḍid actually enlarged the Prophet's Mosque (*amara bi-al-ziyāda fī al-maṣjid al-jāmi' bi-al-Madīna*); see 'Abbās, *Shadharāt*, 421. This is, however, probably reading too much into it; the inscription, as transcribed by Ibn Rusta, speaks only of 'renovation work' (*tajdīd 'imāratihī*).

¹⁰⁹ Al-Bakrī, *Masālik*, I, 410 (§690).

mid fourth/tenth century by al-Muqaddasī.¹¹⁰ When this mosque was built is not clear. Al-Samhūdī argued that a mosque commemorating the site at which Ḥamza was killed (*maṣraʿ*) – not necessarily the same place where he was buried – was built by ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz because of the nearby presence of the telltale ornamented fitted stones (*ḥijāra manqūsha muṭābaqa*), but we have no way of knowing whether his assumption was correct.¹¹¹

It is perhaps more likely that the Abbasids rather than the Umayyads would have commemorated this site, since Ḥamza was a brother of their family's eponym, al-ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. What we might call 'grave politics' was clearly very important in early Islamic Medina and not everybody was allowed to be buried where they or their family wished.¹¹² Muʿāwiyā's governor of Medina, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, for example, was said by one account to have prevented the former's principal opponent's son, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, from being buried in ʿĀʾisha's apartment (together with Muḥammad, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar); he was interred in Baqīʾ al-Gharqad instead.¹¹³ ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān was widely believed to have been barred at first from burial either with the Prophet and his two caliphal predecessors or in Baqīʾ al-Gharqad. Instead he was buried in a location called Ḥashsh Kawkab which was only later brought within the area of al-Baqīʾ by the Umayyads.¹¹⁴ ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿImrān seems to have thought of Baqīʾ al-Gharqad as something of a family cemetery; he defined it as 'where the Banū Hāshim [i.e. various branches of Muḥammad's family, including the Alids and the Abbasid caliphs] bury each other today.'¹¹⁵ In this atmosphere of tension surrounding grave sites, it might be rather surprising if the Umayyad rulers had built

¹¹⁰ Ibn Shabba, *Taʾrikh*, I, 82, also cited in al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafāʾ*, III, 309, 328; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 82. Ibn al-Najjār noted that a larger shrine (*mashhad*) was several centuries later built over Ḥamza's grave by the mother of the caliph al-Nāṣir in 590/1193–4; see his *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 127. On the history of Ḥamza's grave, see further Rāḡib, 'Premiers monuments funéraires', 31; Leisten, *Architektur für Tote*, 194; Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 508–9 (no. 168).

¹¹¹ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafāʾ*, III, 206–7.

¹¹² For the wider context, see Zaman, 'Death'; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*.

¹¹³ Ibn Shabba, *Taʾrikh*, I, 74.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., I, 75–6; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrikh*, I, 3045–50; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 233; al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafāʾ*, III, 297–9. In one narrative provided by al-Wāqidi, it was even suggested that ʿUthmān should be buried in the so-called 'cemetery of the Jews' (*maqbarat al-yahūd*); see al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrikh*, I, 3047.

¹¹⁵ Ibn Shabba, *Taʾrikh*, I, 80. According to another anecdote of al-Wāqidi's, the area of Ḥashsh Kawkab incorporated into Baqīʾ al-Gharqad also came to be known as the Umayyads' cemetery (*maqbarat banī Umayya*); see al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrikh*, I, 3048.

a structure memorialising the place at which a prominent ancestor of a rival family had been martyred fighting a non-Muslim army led by the caliph Mu'awiya's own father.

CONCLUSION

In a very recent study, Najam Haider has demonstrated how the Imāmi Shī'a of the early Islamic centuries sanctified the urban topography of Kufa – which had been founded by the conquerors of Sasanian Iraq in 17/638 – by first transforming the town's originally tribal mosques into 'sectarian' ones, and then by designating some of these as 'blessed' and others as 'cursed'.¹¹⁶ It should be clear by now that similar processes of sanctification – indeed on an even grander scale – were taking place in Medina at the same time. Local historians such as Ibn Zabāla, Ibn Shabba and Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī painted a landscape covered with sites commemorating the Prophet Muḥammad's career in Medina. It is by no means clear that all of these 'sites' had a physical presence in the town's topography, but gradually over the first-third/seventh–ninth centuries many of them were given one, usually – so we are told at least – by successive caliphs and their official representatives in the town. This sanctification of Medina's landscape both in literature and through monuments shows little sign of having begun before the Marwanid seizure of power in the Ḥijāz from 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr in 73/692, and probably had to wait another fifteen years before al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik ordered the (re-) construction of the Prophet's Mosque in 88/706–7.

Further evidence for this gap of three-quarters of a century between Muḥammad's death and the beginnings of interest in resurrecting the memory of sites connected to his career is the fact that the earliest sources of information we possess are often divided on the issue of where many of them actually were. I suggested earlier that the Marwanid work in Medina may have fixed the location of Muḥammad's grave; we can add here another example, the grave of his daughter Fāṭima. There was a considerable debate over whether she was buried in her apartment, which would have been included within the Marwanid mosque, or in Baqī' al-Gharqad.¹¹⁷ Many early scholars, including Abū Ghassān and

¹¹⁶ Haider, *Origins of the Shī'a*, 231–48.

¹¹⁷ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 72; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 231; al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rif*, 102; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 205–6; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 280–9; Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 504–6 (no. 165).

Ibn Zabāla, seem to have placed her burial in al-Baqī, and al-Mas'ūdī even cites the text of a marble inscription from a grave in that cemetery which read:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Praise be to God, Creator of nations and Reviver of remains. This is the grave of Fāṭima, daughter of the Messenger of God (ṣ), mistress of the world's ladies; and the grave of al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, Muḥammad b. 'Alī and Ja'far b. Muḥammad, peace be upon all of them.¹¹⁸

In spite of the rather nice coincidence at one site – as this text suggests – of the Prophet's daughter and the second, fourth, fifth and sixth of the Shī'ī *imāms*, the Ismā'īlī traveller Nāṣer-e Khosrow (discussing his visit to Medina in 439/1048) noted that 'the Shī'a claim that there [in the Prophet's Mosque] is the grave of Fāṭima al-Zahrā'.¹¹⁹ This implies an eventual sectarian nature to the dispute, but the earlier sources simply suggest that the actual site of Fāṭima's grave had been 'forgotten' and required (re-)discovering, from which we may in turn infer that such a location was not deemed worthy of commemoration for a while after her death.

When the interest in providing monuments – in literature and physically – did finally arise, it was by no means focused on the Prophet's Mosque and the tomb enclosure alone. Other sites commemorating aspects of the careers of Muḥammad and his Companions were also important. Over time, however, the increasing centrality of the mosque and tomb enclosure was emphasised: these appear to have provided the overriding focus for Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī's late third-/ninth-century local history in a way that they had not for Ibn Zabāla and Ibn Shabba. Likewise,

¹¹⁸ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 79–80; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 286; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, IV, 132–3.

¹¹⁹ Nāṣer-e Khosrow, *Safarnāma*, 77. Perhaps a little more than a half a century before Nāṣer-e Khosrow's journey, the Imāmī Ibn Bābawayh on his trip to Medina after a *hajj* acted as though Fāṭima's tomb were in her chamber (*bayt*), by then within the Prophet's Mosque; see his *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu*, II, 341–3. The same author also noted (at II, 345) that there was a 'mosque' (*masjid*) on the site of the graves of the four *imāms* in al-Baqī. What is possibly the earliest known to-date depiction of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina (see note 18) includes in the top left (i.e. southeast) corner a square chamber containing four graves. This is clearly an attempt to depict the enclosure which included the graves of Muḥammad, Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Flood has suggested that the fourth grave could either reflect traditions of Fāṭima's burial place or that an additional grave within the chamber was supposedly reserved for Jesus; see his 'Faith, religion', 249. The latter is certainly also plausible; it would seem, from a brief analysis of the discussion in al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, II, 318, that the idea that Jesus was to be buried in the chamber was around in Sunnī and Shī'ī circles at least by the mid-to-late third/ninth century.

the evidence for Abbasid patronage of sites in Medina does display a proportionally greater concern – when compared with the evidence for Umayyad patronage – with the Prophet's Mosque rather than other sites associated with his career. When the poet al-Faḍl b. al-'Abbās al-'Alawī came to compose a lament for Medina in the wake of an attack on the town by two Alids in 271/884, who were attempting to extort money from the populace, he emphasised exclusively the desecration of sites within the Prophet's Mosque:

The abode of the *hijra* of the beneficent pure one has been lain
waste; its destruction has made the Muslims weep.
O Eye, weep for the *maqām Jibrīl* and the grave (*qabr*), weep
for the auspicious *minbar*
And over the mosque whose foundation is god-fearing but
empty of worshippers when forenoon comes;
And over Ṭayba which God blessed with the seal of the
messengers.
May God disgrace a group who destroyed it and who obeyed
one who leads astray and is cursed,
Who destroyed it at the whim of a black slave who flees
without serving God with the true religion.
I will be forever mournful because of what
they inflicted upon the Prophet's sanctity.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ This is a translation of the poem given by al-Marzubānī, *Mu'jam al-shu'arā'*, 226–7. There is a slightly different version (missing the last two verses) in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 2106, and the fourth line, with a slight variant, is given in Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 128. (The poet's name also changes slightly from one text to another.) Ṭayba (verse four) is another common name for Medina and, given the context, the 'mosque whose foundation is god-fearing' is more likely here to indicate the Prophet's Mosque than the Masjid Qubā'; for this debate, see note 88.

Following in the Prophet's Footsteps, Visiting His Grave: Early Islamic Pilgrimage to Medina

This investigation into the emergence of Medina as an identifiably Islamic holy city has so far focused on two particular aspects: firstly, the creation of a sacred space (*ḥaram*) within the oasis during the career of Muḥammad and that space's expansion and development through the activity of a number of scholars and caliphs over the succeeding centuries; secondly, the development of sacred landscape and topography for the Islamic town, over the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, through a combination of the historiographical and physical commemoration of particular sites identified as having some connection with the career of the Prophet. Both are absolutely crucial parts of the story, but one outstanding issue remains: pilgrimage. Pilgrimage to holy cities and other sacred spaces is a worldwide phenomenon; within the Islamic world, alongside the *ḥajj* to Mecca a variety of local practices of pilgrimage (often called in Arabic *ziyārāt*, sing. *ziyāra*, 'visitation') can be found in most cities and even widely in rural areas.¹ The urban fabric of Mecca and Medina and the infrastructural development of the Hijāz are unthinkable without the *ḥajj* and the *ziyāra* to Medina, with which many pilgrims for centuries have complemented their performance of the rites in Mecca. In this chapter, I will investigate what evidence exists for a custom of pilgrimage to any sites in Medina over the earliest Islamic

¹ There are many studies on the *ḥajj*, but for general introductions see Peters, *Hajj*. For the early Islamic *ḥajj*, see also Hawting, 'Hajj' and McMillan, *Meaning of Mecca*. For work on some of these *ziyārāt*, mostly concerning the period after the fifth/eleventh century, see Olesen, *Culte des saints*; Taylor, *In the Vicinity*; Meri, *Cult of Saints*; and Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 11–168. For a history of pilgrimage customs in Arabia over the *longue durée*, see McCorriston, *Pilgrimage and Household*, 19–134.

centuries, together with those particular rituals involved and the meaning of the practice(s) that we can witness.

As the reader will surely expect by now, there is virtually no documentary evidence for any such practice from the first four or five centuries AH.² The discussion in this chapter will be based primarily on much the same kinds of material – local histories, *ḥadīth* collections, *fiqh* works – that informed our conclusions in the preceding chapters. We can start here by focusing on those reports which seem to offer evidence for practices of pilgrimage to some of the individual sites outside of the Prophet's Mosque discussed in Chapter 4, before we turn in more detail to the latter and Muḥammad's grave within it. In general, the discussion will focus on theoretical discussions in *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* works to begin with, but will return to the question of what historical evidence there is for actual practices towards the end of this chapter.

FOLLOWING IN THE PROPHET'S FOOTSTEPS

The late second- and third-/ninth-century local historians of Medina included several traditions which presumably sought to encourage pious visitation of some of the sites in Medina associated with the career of Muḥammad. On the Masjid Qubā', for example, there are a number of *ḥadīths* which equate a visit there for prayer (*ṣalāt*) with the performance of an 'umra to Mecca;³ a smaller group of reports suggest that performing the prayer in Qubā' is more meritorious than performing it in Jerusalem.⁴ Such comparisons certainly did not obligate a visit to the Masjid Qubā' for every Muslim, but they nonetheless provided the justification for such a trip. No doubt equally important in this regard were those *ḥadīths* which explained how and when Muḥammad himself (and occasionally

² The most important document that does exist and is probably datable to the third/ninth or fourth/tenth centuries is the fragmentary paper scroll held in the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, on which see Chapter 4, note 18. Alongside a schematic depiction of the Prophet's Mosque, this scroll contains text praising Medina and encouraging pilgrimage to Muḥammad's grave.

³ For an overall discussion (including references to traditions from Ibn Zabāla, Ibn Shabba and Yahyā al-Aqīqī among others), see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, III, 141–4; also, for example, see Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 363; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh*, I, 32–3; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 188; al-Maṭārī, *Tārīf*, 111; and al-Marāghī, *Ṭahqīq al-nuṣra*, 51–2.

⁴ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 363; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh*, I, 33; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 188; al-Maṭārī, *Tārīf*, 111; al-Marāghī, *Ṭahqīq al-nuṣra*, 53; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, III, 144–5.

other important early figures) had come to the Masjid Qubā' to pray there, and where exactly he had prayed.⁵ The precise date such traditions entered circulation is hard to pin down, but because they appear already in works of the early third/ninth century it is reasonable to assume that they were current at the latest by the late second/eighth century. Abū Ghassān (d. before 210/825–6) offered one report which outlines the route which Muḥammad used to take from his house via the *muṣallā* to Qubā'; he concluded by adding that his source, Ishāq b. Abī Bakr b. Ishāq, recollected that he had seen the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik following precisely this route to and back from Qubā'.⁶

The graves of the martyrs of the Battle of Uḥud, to the north of the Islamic town, and of the early Companions and Successors in Baqī' al-Gharqad, east of the Prophet's Mosque, were also the subject of traditions encouraging visitation. Ibn Zabāla (d. after 199/814) may not have discussed the graves at Uḥud, but other relatively early authorities, including Abū Ghassān and 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Imrān (d. 197/812–13), reported that several early figures – Muḥammad, his daughter Fāṭima and some early caliphs – visited these.⁷ These are not necessarily historical recollections, but were intended to be exhortations to later Muslims to visit the site.

A handful of groups of miracle stories are recounted in connection to the graves of the martyrs of Uḥud. According to one such group, the greeting of those who visit the tombs is returned by those in the graves.⁸ Discussions of the cemetery of Baqī' al-Gharqad and the prominent graves within are also full of similar *ḥadīths* about how the Prophet visited those graves and where precisely they were located, all of which would have facilitated and encouraged pilgrimages to them by later Muslims.⁹

⁵ See in general the discussions in al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 146–53, 159–60 (with citations from a host of earlier authorities including Ibn Zabāla, Ibn Shabba and Yahyā); also see, for example, Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 363; al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 299–300 (*Kitāb Faḍl al-ṣalāt fī masjid Makka wa-al-Madīna*, bābs 2–4) Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, II, 365–6 (*Kitāb al-Manāsik*, bāb 95); Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 34, 39, 41; *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 397; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 187–8; and al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 109–11.

⁶ Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 41–2; also cited in al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 159.

⁷ See within Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 85–6; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, II, 366 (*Kitāb al-Manāsik*, bāb, 96); al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, III, 303–9; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 127; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 216–17; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 322–4.

⁸ For example, al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, III, 307–9; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 127; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 323–4.

⁹ On Baqī' al-Gharqad, see Ibn Shabba, *Ta'rikh*, I, 61–83; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 82; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 229–34; al-Maṭārī, *Ta'rif*, 97–104; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 200–10; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, III, 257–311; al-Anṣārī, *Āthār al-Madīna*, 175–6; al-Bakrī and Ṭāhā, *Baqī' al-Gharqad*; Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*,

That four of the Alid *imāms* – al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja‘far al-Šādiq – and maybe also Muḥammad’s daughter, Fāṭima, were held, by the fourth/tenth century, to have been buried in al-Baqī’ also ensured that the cemetery became a recommended pilgrimage site for some Shī‘a.¹⁰

Some of the other mosques, discussed earlier, in which Muḥammad was said to have prayed, also acquired reports which may have encouraged pilgrimage. We have already seen in Chapter 4 that the Masjid Banī Zafar was thought to contain a stone which could help women who had difficulty conceiving become pregnant. Such a tradition is unlikely to have inspired pilgrimages across a serious distance, but some may have visited the mosque from Medina’s hinterland for this purpose. By the fourth/tenth century, we have good evidence that Imāmī Shī‘a were being encouraged to undertake pilgrimage to Medina; the principal focus was on the Prophet’s Mosque and grave, but other sites were included as well. Abū Ja‘far al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) and Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991–2) included within their discussions of Medina sections that can best be described as guides for pilgrims to the town.¹¹ A very brief overview of the main points of these guides can also be found in a work by the Ismā‘īlī al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān (d. 363/974).¹² As well as sites within the Prophet’s Mosque, these guides explain how pilgrims should go about visiting Baqī’ al-Gharqad, the Masjid Qubā’, Mashrabat Umm Ibrāhīm, the Masjid al-Faḍīkh, the graves of the martyrs of Uḥud and especially Ḥamza b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and the Masjid al-Faṭḥ. From outside the Shī‘ī tradition, we have less evidence for such pilgrimage guides at this time, but the *Kitāb al-Manāsik* – written at the turn of the third–fourth/ninth–tenth century – did include a list of ‘the Prophet’s (ṣ) mosques in Medina’, the visitation of which we might plausibly infer that work’s author was recommending.¹³ According to citations by al-Samhūdī (d. 911/1506), a rough contemporary of the *Kitāb al-Manāsik*’s author, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Asadī, listed at least the Masjid al-Faṭḥ, Masjid al-Suqyā and Masjid Dhubbāb among those mosques in which the Prophet had prayed that Muslims should visit.¹⁴

180–5 (particularly on the later Wāḥḥābī destruction of tombs there); *EP*, s.v. ‘Baqī’ al-Gharqad’ (W. Ende).

¹⁰ As well as the discussion in Chapter 4, see Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu*, II, 344–5; al-Harawī, *Ishārāt*, 248–9.

¹¹ Al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi*, IV, 548–66; Ibn Bābawayh, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu*, II, 334–51.

¹² Al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, I, 295–7.

¹³ *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 397–402.

¹⁴ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-wafā*, III, 198, 201. For more on al-Asadī, see Chapter 3, note 16.

The Prophet's Mosque is, unsurprisingly, the Medinan monument to which we have the most evidence for encouragement of pilgrimage. Over the centuries, a large number of Muslim scholars came to accept and elaborate on a semi-formalised ritual practice of *ziyāra*, 'visitation', to Muḥammad's grave, and our focus will return to this practice slightly later in this chapter. For now, we can note that a number of *ḥadīths* were in circulation, at least from the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, which encouraged pilgrimage for prayer in the Prophet's Mosque in general and not specifically at the tomb enclosure of the Prophet, Abū Bakr and 'Umar. In an article of 1969, M. J. Kister studied several of these *ḥadīths*, which he seems to have thought were in circulation during the early second/eighth century.¹⁵ Perhaps the most famous and widespread of these ran: 'You shall only set out for three mosques: the Sacred Mosque (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*), my mosque [in Medina] and al-Aqṣā mosque [in Jerusalem].'¹⁶ Another group of very widely transmitted *ḥadīths* compared the relative merits of prayer in the mosques of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, with the merits of prayer in other locations (for example Mount Sinai, Kufa and Damascus) brought into consideration from time to time. One representative example of such a tradition goes: 'Prayer there – meaning the mosque of Medina – is more meritorious than 1,000 prayers anywhere else except the mosque of Mecca.'¹⁷ The usual hierarchy of such reports was to place Mecca first, then Medina and then Jerusalem, but variants to this order are attested. A final, much rarer but nonetheless relevant *ḥadīth* had Abū Hurayra declare that Muḥammad had said: 'Whosoever comes to my mosque only for a good which he either knows or learns, he has the status of one who strives in God's path. Whosoever comes there for another reason, he has the status of one who is looking for another provision.'¹⁸

Such promotion of pilgrimage to Medina and various sites within the area was not allowed to stand without opposition. It is well known to modern scholarship that Muslim scholars fairly intensely debated, from

¹⁵ Kister, 'You shall only set out for three mosques'.

¹⁶ The translation is slightly adapted from Kister, 'You shall only set out for three mosques', 173. The phrase which Kister rendered as 'You shall only set out for three mosques' is literally translated as 'The saddles [of the riding beasts] shall not be fastened [for setting out for pilgrimage] except for three mosques' (*lā tushaddu al-riḥāl illā ilā thalāthat masājid*). On the origins of this particular *ḥadīth*, see also Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 153–7; Lecker, 'Biographical notes', 41–8.

¹⁷ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 361. For many more such *ḥadīths* and references, see Kister, 'You shall only set out for three mosques'.

¹⁸ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 360.

at least the second/eighth century onwards, the permissibility of visiting and praying at graves; the graves in Baqī al-Gharqad and of the martyrs of Uḥud played some role in these debates.¹⁹ One of the earliest extant treatises on *bida'* (sing. *bid'a*), 'impermissible innovations', by the Cordovan Mālikī scholar Ibn Waḍḍāḥ (d. 287/900), included a short chapter condemning 'following in [the Prophet's] footsteps' (*ittibā' al-āthār*).²⁰ The first narrative in this chapter, attributed to al-Ma'rūr b. Suwayd al-Asadī,²¹ makes clear Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's disapproval of pilgrimage to pray in mosques in which Muḥammad had prayed:

I set out with the Commander of the Faithful, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, from Mecca to Medina. When morning came, he led us in the morning prayer. Then he saw people heading in a certain direction (*yadhabūna madhaban*), and he said, 'Where are they going?' He was told, 'Commander of the Faithful, to a mosque in which the Messenger of God (s) prayed. They are coming to pray there.' ['Umar] said, 'Those who acted like this before you, following the footsteps of their prophets and taking them as synagogues and churches, have perished. Those of you whom [the time for] prayer reaches while they are in these mosques, let them pray [there]; those whom not, let them pass on and not head for them.'

Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849) included in his *Muṣannaf* a similar *ḥadīth* attributed to al-Ma'rūr al-Asadī arguing against the practice.²² In spite of this opposition to the practice of seeking out mosques in which Muḥammad had prayed, however, it is worth clarifying that it was by no means only in local histories of Medina that such a practice was recommended.²³

The *Muṣannaf* of the Yemeni emigrant to Mecca, 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/827), also included a handful of opinions of important early scholars who supposedly condemned visiting Medina, or at least saw nothing worthwhile in the practice. The Meccan 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 115/733) advised a man that 'seven circumambulations of the "house" (*bayt*) [i.e. the Ka'ba] are better than your journey to Medina.'²⁴ 'Abd al-Razzāq also reported that when one of his associates had declared to the Kufan Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) his intention to visit Medina,

¹⁹ As well as the references for *ziyārāt* in note 1, see Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*.

²⁰ Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, *Bida'*, 185–8; for discussion, see Fierro, 'Treatises', 217–19.

²¹ An implausibly long-lived transmitter whom Sulaymān al-A'mash had met when he was one hundred and twenty years old; see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa-al-ta'dīl*, viii, 415–16; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxviii, 262–3.

²² Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, iii, 367–8.

²³ See, for example, al-Bukhārī, *Jāmi'*, i, 132–5 (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāt*, bāb 89), 299–301 (*Kitāb Faḍl al-ṣalāt fī masjid Makka wa-al-Madīna*).

²⁴ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, v, 134–5.

the latter responded simply, 'Don't do that!'²⁵ In spite of the relative prominence of traditions encouraging pilgrimage to Medina or certain specific sites there, it was clearly not a universally recommended act during the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries.

VISITING THE PROPHET'S GRAVE

By far the best known Islamic pilgrimage practice involving Medina came to be the *ziyāra*, 'visitation', to the tomb enclosure constructed within the Prophet's Mosque in the late first/early eighth century, which contained the graves of Muḥammad and the first two caliphs, Abū Bakr and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.²⁶ This practice never became fully accepted by all Muslim scholars, but from at least the sixth/twelfth century such scholars regularly discussed and debated the permissibility and popularity of Muḥammad's grave as a site of pilgrimage.²⁷ Two influential treatises encouraging and defending the practice, as well as outlining how it should be performed, were composed by Abū al-Yumn 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. 'Asākir (d. 687/1288) and Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355); the latter was written at least partially as a refutation of perhaps the most famously outspoken critic of this *ziyāra*, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328).²⁸ From the work of Ibn al-Najjār (d. 643/1245) onwards, local histories of Medina came as a matter of

²⁵ Ibid., v, 134. The question of Sufyān's opinions concerning pilgrimage to Medina is rather confusing. As well as this opinion preserved by 'Abd al-Razzāq, one recension (Abū al-Qāsim Ṭāhir's) of Yahyā al-'Aqīqī's *Akbbār al-Madīna* also had al-Thawrī transmit a *ḥadīth* encouraging the visitation of Muḥammad's grave; see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, v, 29. In light of the discussion later in this chapter of the process of the emergence of *ḥadīths* encouraging pilgrimage to Muḥammad's tomb enclosure and the prominent role Yahyā al-'Aqīqī played in that process, Sufyān al-Thawrī's opinion as preserved by 'Abd al-Razzāq seems to me to have greater potential weight, but there is no firm evidence for this assumption.

²⁶ Interesting recent studies of aspects of this practice, mostly discussing the period of the sixth/twelfth century and later, include Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 45–82; Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*, 227–76.

²⁷ One of the firmest proponents of this pilgrimage, the North African Mālikī al-Qādī Iyād (d. 544/1149), was being a little disingenuous when he asserted that 'the visitation to his (s) grave is one of the Muslim customs (*sunan*) that there is consensus upon'; see his *Shifā'*, II, 71.

²⁸ Ibn 'Asākir, *Ithāf al-zāir*; al-Subkī, *Shifā' al-saqām*. Al-Samhūdī, who made much use of al-Subkī's treatise, referred to it on one occasion as 'the refutation of Ibn Taymiyya on the issue of the *ziyāra*'; see his *Wafā' al-wafā'*, v, 107. Ibn Taymiyya's arguments against this pilgrimage are discussed in Olesen, *Culte des saints*, esp. 63–79, and within a general introduction to the production of manuals and treatises on this topic in Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 67–82.

course to include a section on the practice of pilgrimage to Muḥammad's grave.²⁹

Tracing an outline of the discussion prior to the sixth/twelfth century, however, is actually quite tricky. Plenty of *ḥadīths* found throughout early (i.e. mostly third-/ninth- and early fourth-/tenth-century) collections promote prayer for the Prophet (*al-ṣalāt 'alā al-nabī*) and greeting him (*al-taslīm 'alayhi*); Ismā'il b. Ishāq al-Qāḍī (d. 282/895–6) is even credited with the composition of a short treatise on the subject.³⁰ The Qur'ān had already remarked that 'God and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, pray for him and greet him' (Q33.56). In most of these *ḥadīths* and the Quranic verse, however, there is absolutely no suggestion that anyone needs to go in person to Muḥammad's grave in Medina to do this.³¹ A number of *ḥadīths* suggest that God has made it the job of His angels to carry Muslims' prayers and greetings for the Prophet to his grave from wherever in the world they are issued.³² One particularly popular anecdote was circulating in compilations of the same period in which 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, whenever he returned to Medina from a journey, would first go to greet Muḥammad, Abū Bakr and 'Umar in their graves.³³ This narrative may not, however, have been spread to encourage pilgrimage to these graves: Ibn 'Umar lived in Medina, so he was not going out of his way to visit the town, and Ma'mar b. Rāshid (d. 154/770) reported that no Companion other than Ibn 'Umar was known to have followed this practice.³⁴

²⁹ Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 219–26; al-Āqshahrī, *al-Rawḍa al-firdawsīyya*, within I, 75–247; al-Maṭarī, *Ta'rif*, 65–71; al-Marjānī, *Bahjat al-nufus*, II, 906–75; al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣṣa*, 161–83; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, v, 5–131. There is a short discussion of al-Maṭarī's material in Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*, 233.

³⁰ Ismā'il b. Ishāq al-Qāḍī, *Faḍl al-ṣalāt*.

³¹ See, for example, Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, XI, 55–7; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, III, 102, 261; IV, 108; VI, 282–3; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, II, 124–5 (*Kitāb al-Waṭr*, bāb 26); al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, II, 127–8 (*Kitāb al-Mawāqīt*, bāb 117); al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, II, 408–9 (*Kitāb al-Riqāq*, bāb 58); Abū Ya'la, *Musnad*, XI, 380, 404; Wensinck, *Concordance*, III, 349 (s.v. 'ṣ-l-w'). Many of the *ḥadīths* in Ismā'il b. Ishāq al-Qāḍī's *Faḍl al-ṣalāt* make it clear that one does not have to be in Medina in person to do this; at 40–1 is an example that makes this especially clear.

³² 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, II, 215; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 603; XI, 34; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, I, 441; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, I, 524 (*Kitāb al-Janā'iz*, bāb 65); al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, II, 409 (*Kitāb al-Riqāq*, bāb 58); Ismā'il b. Ishāq al-Qāḍī, *Faḍl al-ṣalāt*, 36; Ibn Balabān, *Iḥṣān*, III, 195. For angels at the Prophet's grave, see also a report attributed to Ibn Abī al-Dunayā in *al-Mawṭi' wa-al-qubūr*, 75 (no. 21).

³³ For just a few examples, see Mālik, *Muwatta'* [*riwāyat al-Shaybānī*], 306; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, III, 576; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, IV, 559–60; Ismā'il b. Ishāq al-Qāḍī, *Faḍl al-ṣalāt*, 83–5.

³⁴ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, III, 576. Ma'mar may not have been correct in this assertion: al-Samhūdī cited Ibn Zabāla for a similar anecdote in which Anas b. Mālik greeted the Prophet in his grave; see his *Wafā' al-wafā'*, v, 77.

In these same collections, *ḥadīths* also appear which seem to express disapproval of a practice of travelling to Muḥammad's grave specifically to pray there and might, therefore, be taken as evidence that it was a known practice already by the end of the second/eighth century. One of Muḥammad's final deathbed utterances is said to have been a curse of the Jews and Christians for taking the graves of their prophets as places of worship (*masājid*).³⁵ In an interesting variant, Muḥammad declared, 'By God, do not make my grave an idol (*wathan*) to be prayed towards. May God's anger strengthen against a people who take the graves of their prophets as places of worship!'³⁶ Such discussions and *ḥadīths*, of course, are also to be understood against the general backdrop of debates concerning the legitimacy of visiting tombs, praying for the dead and building mausoleums over graves.³⁷ One of the possible explanations for the existence of these traditions, in which it is made explicitly clear that prayers and greetings for the Prophet are equally valid wherever they are issued, is that they were part of an argument against a practice of pilgrimage to his grave to perform those actions. A later Imāmī tradition, ascribed to the sixth *imām* Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), dealt with this potential threat head on: 'Pass by Medina and greet the Messenger of God (ṣ) up close even though prayers reach him from afar.'³⁸

There are actually a handful of explicit rejections in early *ḥadīth* compilations of the practice of going to Muḥammad's grave for prayer and to greet him. Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) was known to have disapproved of someone who said, 'I visited the Prophet', although later Mālikīs – who generally supported *ziyāra* – tried to explain this away.³⁹ The famous early Medinan scholar Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab (d. 94/713) disapproved of people whom he saw greeting Muḥammad, but seemingly on the grounds that he did not think that the Prophet was actually in the grave any more.⁴⁰ Apparently al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī once prevented people from doing anything at the grave and recited the Prophet's words to them: 'Don't take my grave as a place of festival (*'īd*^{am}) and don't take your homes as graves. Pray for me wherever you may be for your prayers will reach me.'⁴¹

³⁵ See Chapter 4, note 51.

³⁶ Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 366; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, II, 246.

³⁷ On which see esp. Goldziher, *Muslims Studies*, I, 209–38; II, 255–341; Leisten, *Architektur für Töte*; Schöller, *Living and the Dead*; Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*.

³⁸ Al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi*, IV, 552; a slight variant at 553.

³⁹ Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 27. For an example of later Mālikī attachment to the *ziyāra*, see note 27.

⁴⁰ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, III, 576–7; see also Szilágyi, 'Prophet like Jesus', 142.

⁴¹ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, III, 577; Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, III, 365–6; with slight variation in Ismā'īl b. Ishāq al-Qāḍī, *Faḍl al-ṣalāt*, 40–1. This *ḥadīth* without the background

By the time the topic of the *ziyāra* came to receive fuller discussion by the sixth/twelfth century, there were, of course, specific *ḥadīths* explicitly encouraging visiting Muḥammad's grave after his death. Various sources offer somewhere between ten and twenty such *ḥadīths*, and they mostly promise the Prophet's intercession (or something similar) for the pilgrim come the Day of Resurrection. Some also threaten punishment for those who undertake the *ḥajj* to Mecca but do not add a trip to Muḥammad's grave to their journey to the Ḥijāz.⁴² Much of the clearest evidence for the circulation of these *ḥadīths* comes only from the fourth/tenth century, among both the Sunnīs and the Shī'a, although we will see that a few relevant *ḥadīths* were in circulation earlier. The earliest author of a work who displayed a keen interest in promoting the practice of pilgrimage to Muḥammad's grave, and transmitted a handful of these '*man zāranī*' traditions, is the Alid local historian of Medina, Yaḥyā al-ʿAqīqī (d. 277/890), and so it makes sense to start with him. Both al-Subkī and al-Samhūdī cited two *ḥadīths* from Yaḥyā's *Akhhbār al-Madīna* in their main argumentation for the practice of visiting the Prophet's grave:

- (1.) Whosoever visits my grave after my death, it will be as though he had visited me during my lifetime. Whosoever does not visit me has treated me harshly.
- (2.) Whosoever comes to Medina to visit me, my intercession will be obligated for him on the Day of Resurrection; and whosoever dies in one of the two *ḥarams* [here meaning Mecca and Medina], he will be resurrected secure.⁴³

Al-Subkī also stated that the second of these came from a chapter of Yaḥyā's *Akhhbār al-Madīna* entitled 'What has come down concerning the pilgrimage to the Prophet's (ṣ) grave and greeting him' (*mā jā'a fī ziyārat qabr al-nabī [ṣ] wa-fī al-salām 'alayhi*).⁴⁴ Abū Sa'īd al-Kharkūshī (d. 407/1016) cited at least one more *ḥadīth* from Yaḥyā's work, transmitted through the recension of his son, Abū al-Qāsim Ṭāhir: 'Whosoever visits my grave, my intercession is obligated for him.'⁴⁵ Al-Samhūdī also

story is also attributed to Abū Hurayra in Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, II, 366 (*Kitāb al-Manāsik*, bāb, 96). A similar anecdote features the fourth *imām*, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 95/713); see Ismā'īl b. Ishāq al-Qāḍī, *Faḍl al-ṣalāt*, 35–6.

⁴² Some, although by no means all, of these *ḥadīths* begin, 'Whosoever visits me after my death ...' (*man zāranī ba'd mawtī*), or 'Whosoever visits my grave ...' (*man zāra qabrī*). For the sake of ease, I refer to all of these related *ḥadīths* as the '*man zāranī*' traditions, only adding more specificity where necessary.

⁴³ Al-Subkī, *Shifā' al-saqām*, 155–8; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, v, 27–9.

⁴⁴ Al-Subkī, *Shifā' al-saqām*, 158.

⁴⁵ Al-Kharkūshī, *Sharaf al-muṣṭafā'*, III, 168–9.

cited from Yaḥyā a number of passages with guidance for the performance of aspects of the *ziyāra*, presumably from this section of his work, as well as further reports with recommended practices for visiting the Prophet's Mosque in general.⁴⁶

Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī's interest in this pilgrimage by the end of the third/ninth century is, therefore, relatively clear and well documented. Things are not so clear earlier. It is helpful now to separate our discussion of Sunnī and Shī'ī works and start with the former. The oldest extant compilation that includes one of the '*man zāranī*' *ḥadīths* is probably the *Musnad* ascribed to al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 204/819–20), in which the following is included within the section on unique reports (*afrād*) transmitted by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb: 'Whosoever visits my grave – or whosoever visits me – I will be an intercessor – or witness – for him; and whosoever dies in one of the two *ḥarams*, God will resurrect him among the secure on the Day of Resurrection.'⁴⁷ 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* also includes a version of one of the '*man zāranī*' group of *ḥadīths*, but it is not actually clear here that it refers to the practice of pilgrimage to visit the Prophet's grave, because the tradition does not necessarily assume Muḥammad to be dead: 'Whosoever visits me – meaning whosoever comes to Medina – will be under my protection; whosoever dies – meaning in either of the two *ḥarams* – will be resurrected among the secure on the Day of Resurrection.'⁴⁸ Ibn Zabāla also included in his *Akhhbār al-Madīna* a *ḥadīth* similar to the first part of 'Abd al-Razzāq's.⁴⁹ The local history of Mecca by Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Fākihī (d. ca. 279/892–3) is perhaps the oldest extant source to include a *ḥadīth* linking the *ziyāra* to the *ḥajj*: 'Whosoever undertakes the *ḥajj* and visits my grave after my death, it will be as though he visited me during my lifetime.'⁵⁰ Later works attribute one *ḥadīth* on the question to Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 280/892), sometimes specifically to his *Kitāb al-Qubūr*.⁵¹ To end our coverage of the third/ninth century, it should be

⁴⁶ For the former, see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā al-wafā*, v, 61, 77, 101, 107–8; for the latter, see ii, 441, 451–3.

⁴⁷ Al-Ṭayālīsī, *Musnad*, i, 66.

⁴⁸ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, ix, 267; see also Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 46–7.

⁴⁹ Al-Marāghī, *Tahqīq al-nuṣra*, 162.

⁵⁰ Al-Fākihī, *Akhhbār Makka*, i, 435–6.

⁵¹ Al-Sahmī, *Tārīkh Jurjān*, 220; Ibn Hajar, *Talkhīṣ al-ḥabīr*, ii, 267; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā al-wafā*, v, 23–4; also with a different *isnād* in al-Subkī, *Shifā al-saqām*, 146. I have not found this *ḥadīth* either in Kinberg's 'reconstruction' of Ibn Abī al-Dunyā's text, nor in that edited by al-'Umūdī. Al-Marjānī noted in his *Bahjat al-nuṣus*, ii, 920, when quoting another *ḥadīth*, that Ibn Abī al-Dunyā had written a *Kitāb Ziyārat al-qubūr* in which there was a 'chapter on the visitation of the Prophet's tomb' (*bāb ziyārat qabr al-nabī*),

noted that very late in that century, Abū Bakr al-Bazzār (d. 292/904–5) apparently included in his *Musnad* at least one such *ḥadīth*: ‘Whosoever visits my grave, my intercession is freed for him.’⁵² It is still, however, particularly notable that Ismā‘īl b. Ishāq al-Qāḍī’s *Faḍl al-ṣalāt ‘alā al-nabī* does not include any *ḥadīths* specifically approving of the practice of travelling for pilgrimage to Muḥammad’s grave.

We know of several more scholars of the fourth/tenth century who included one or more ‘*man zāranī*’ *ḥadīths* within their works: for example, al-Janādī (d. 308/920), al-Uqaylī (d. 323/934), Sa‘īd b. al-Sakan (d. 353/964), Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965), al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971), Ibn ‘Adī (d. 365/976), Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Azdī (d. 374/985), Ibn Muqrī’ (d. 381/991–2) and al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995).⁵³ Al-Samhūdī adduces a *ḥadīth* which he says some were transmitting ‘at the time of Ibn Manda’; there are a fair few candidates for this name, but it could refer to Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Manda al-Iṣfahānī (d. 395/1005).⁵⁴ One such *ḥadīth* also appears in a paper scroll held in Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, tentatively dated to the third/ninth or fourth/tenth century.⁵⁵ Several of these fourth-/tenth-century works which included such *ḥadīths* are dedicated to earlier scholars whose transmission of traditions was held to be in some way defective; from this, we can infer that the ‘*man zāranī*’ traditions were in circulation earlier, but widely held to be problematic. For example, one individual whom al-Uqaylī and Ibn ‘Adī identified as the main person involved in the spread of one of these *ḥadīths* was Mūsā b. Hilāl al-‘Abdī, a Basran who died sometime during the decade ending with 210/825–6.⁵⁶ Another, identified by Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī and Ibn ‘Adī, was al-Nu‘mān b. Shibl

although Schöller, without giving a reason, refers to this reference as ‘spurious’; see his *Living and the Dead*, 67–8.

⁵² As cited in al-Subkī, *Shifā’ al-saqām*, 104; Ibn Hajar, *Talkhīṣ al-ḥabīr*, II, 267.

⁵³ Al-Janādī, *Faḍā’il al-Madīna*, 39; al-Uqaylī, *Du‘afā’*, III, 1144; IV, 1321; Sa‘īd b. al-Sakan (author of a *Ṣaḥīḥ*) *apud* al-Subkī, *Shifā’ al-saqām*, 107, and Ibn Hajar, *Talkhīṣ al-ḥabīr*, II, 267; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Majrūhīn*, III, 73; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-kabīr*, XII, 225, 309–10; Ibn ‘Adī, *Kāmil*, II, 790; VI, 2350; VII, 2480; Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Azdī (author of *al-Fawā’id fī al-ḥadīth*) *apud* al-Subkī, *Shifā’ al-saqām*, 140–3, and al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-wafā’*, V, 22; Ibn Muqrī’, *Mu‘jam*, 80; al-Dāraquṭnī, *Sunan*, II, 278. Such a ‘*man zāranī*’ tradition is also ascribed to Abū Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī’s (d. 307/919–20) *Musnad* (in Ibn Hajar, *Talkhīṣ al-ḥabīr*, II, 266), but it does not appear to be in the available edition of that work.

⁵⁴ Al-Samhūdī, *Wafā’ al-wafā’*, V, 26–7. On this Ibn Manda, see al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*, XVII, 28–43.

⁵⁵ See Chapter 4, note 18.

⁵⁶ Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa-al-ta’dīl*, VIII, 166; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-islām*, XIV, 407–8; Ibn Hajar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, VII, 139–42.

al-Bāhili, a Basran who related *ḥadīths* from Mālik b. Anas.⁵⁷ A third, identified by al-ʿUqaylī, was Faḍāla b. Saʿīd b. Zumayl al-Maʿribī, who seems to have been active in the early-to-mid third/ninth century.⁵⁸ A final example, identified by Ibn ʿAdī and also featuring in *isnāds* offered by al-Fākihī and al-Dāraquṭnī, is Abū ʿUmar Ḥaḥṣ b. Sulaymān al-Asadī (d. ca. 190/805–6), a Kufan who emigrated to Baghdad and who was widely considered a problematic transmitter.⁵⁹ It would seem, therefore, that although some of the *ʿman zāraniʿ* *ḥadīths* had entered circulation by the early third/ninth century at the latest, they were only picked up with greater frequency from the fourth/tenth century onwards.

In spite of this fourth-/tenth-century activity concerning the transmission and discussion of *ʿman zāraniʿ* traditions, it may have been only as late as the fifth/eleventh century that Sunnī scholars came to include specific chapters within their *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* works dedicated to the question of pilgrimage to Muḥammad's grave. (The case is different with the Shīʿa, as will be discussed later in this chapter.) Abū Saʿīd al-Kharkūshī (d. 407/1016) did include several chapters in his *Kitāb Sharaf al-muṣṭafā* which dealt with this issue.⁶⁰ There are also a couple of brief passages in the famous Shāfiʿī al-Māwardī's (d. 450/1058) *al-Hāwī al-kabīr* and another in his *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*.⁶¹ In the first of these passages in *al-Hāwī al-kabīr*, al-Māwardī declared that visiting Muḥammad's grave is an act both commanded and encouraged (*māmūr bihā wa-mandūb ilayhā*). In *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, he included this passage among the duties to be performed by the leader of the *ḥajj*:

If he returns with them [i.e. the pilgrims] he should take them on the route to Medina to visit the Messenger of God's (ṣ) grave so that he can combine for them the *ḥajj* to God's – great and sublime – house and the visitation to the Messenger of God's (ṣ) grave, out of regard for his/its sanctity and in obedience to him. Even though that is not an obligatory act during the *ḥajj*, it is among the recommended principles to be encouraged and the approved customs of the pilgrims.⁶²

Slightly later, al-Bayhaqī (d. 485/1066) gathered together a small selection of *ḥadīths* encouraging this pilgrimage to Medina in a chapter of

⁵⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, vii, 207–9. Apparently, Yahyā al-Aqīqī also used him as a source; see al-Subkī, *Shifāʾ al-saqām*, 155–6, and al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ al-wafāʾ*, v, 27.

⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, v, 449–50.

⁵⁹ Ibn ʿAdī, *Kāmil*, ii, 788–91; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdad*, viii, 186–8; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vii, 10–16.

⁶⁰ Al-Kharkūshī, *Sharaf al-muṣṭafā*, iii, 168–74.

⁶¹ Al-Māwardī, *al-Hāwī al-kabīr*, iv, 214–15, 276; idem, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, 123–4.

⁶² Al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, 123.

his *al-Sunan al-kubrā* on the topic.⁶³ After the mid fifth/eleventh century, chapters of works and even entire treatises by Sunnīs dedicated to the question and practice of the pilgrimage to Medina and Muḥammad's grave become much more common.⁶⁴ That said, as noted earlier, debate on the legitimacy of the practice persisted and has never disappeared.

By the early-to-mid fourth/tenth century, the Imāmī Shī'a certainly had a comparatively sophisticated idea of the pilgrimage to the Prophet's grave, which they coupled with pilgrimage to certain other sites in Medina. This almost certainly was apparent at least by the time of Yahyā al-'Aqīqī's career. No particularly clear ideas concerning the visitation of the Prophet's tomb, however, can be found in the *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin* of Abū Ja'far al-Barqī (d. ca. 274/887–8), although that work does have a relatively extensive discussion of the merits associated with prayer in various mosques in Kufa and with undertaking the *ḥajj*.⁶⁵ At least two Imāmī authors of the fourth/tenth century, however, offered relatively detailed pilgrimage guides for those intending to visit sites in Medina, including the Prophet's grave: al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) and Ibn Bābawayh (d. 381/991–2).⁶⁶ These guides (which were briefly discussed earlier in this chapter) give quite a bit of material about when pilgrims should visit Medina (usually before or after a *ḥajj* or 'umra in Mecca), what rites they should perform before entry, which sites they should visit and in which order (the Prophet's grave should be visited first and again at the end of the visit), what they should do and recite at each of the sites, what rites they should perform before taking their leave of Medina, and more besides. They also include examples of the '*man zāranī*' *ḥadīths* as well as other traditions praising Medina's distinctive merits (*faḍā'il*). Shī'ī scholars presumably elaborated a practice of pilgrimage to Medina earlier than their Sunnī counterparts as an extension of their zeal in promoting visitation to the shrines of 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn at Kufa and Karbala respectively.⁶⁷ Because four of the *imāms* were buried in Medina as well

⁶³ Al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, v, 402–3.

⁶⁴ See the overview in Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 67–82. Muḥammad b. al-Walīd al-Turtūshī (d. 520/1126), an Andalusī scholar who settled in Alexandria, outlined in his anti-*bida'* treatise precisely how one should act when visiting the Prophet's grave; see Fierro, 'Treatises', 221–2.

⁶⁵ Al-Barqī, *Maḥāsin*, 42–56.

⁶⁶ See note 11. Ibn Bābawayh apparently also composed a *Kitāb al-Madīna wa-ziyārat qabr al-nabī wa-al-ʿimma*; see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, II, 313; al-Ṭīhrānī, *Dharīʿa*, xx, 251. (This may actually just refer to the chapters of his *Kitāb Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh* cited here.)

⁶⁷ Haider, *Origins of the Shī'a*, 243–7; Friedmann, 'Kūfa is better'.

as Muḥammad, there was extra incentive for Shīʿī authorities to encourage their followers to perform a pilgrimage to that town as part of the obligatory *ḥajj* to Mecca.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR EARLY ISLAMIC PILGRIMAGE TO MEDINA

The evidence of the *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* compilations suggests that pilgrimage to various sites in Medina, including Muḥammad's grave, was a practice undertaken from the second/eighth century onwards, although scholars only came to discuss it in detail a couple of centuries later. In line with this, there is very little evidence from historical and other more narrative sources for pilgrims heading to Medina during the early Islamic centuries, certainly nothing like as much as there is for those who undertook the *ḥajj* to Mecca.⁶⁸

Given the nature of the narrative sources for early Islamic history, we should probably expect our best evidence for pilgrimage to Medina to come from visits to the town made by Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs from Syria and Iraq respectively. Several Umayyad caliphs did indeed visit the town while on their way to perform the *ḥajj* in Mecca, notably al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 86–96/705–15) in 91/709–10 and his brothers Sulaymān (r. 96–97/715–17), in 97/716, and Hishām (r. 105–25/724–43), in 106/725.⁶⁹ While we hear a little of their activities in Medina, however, we do not for the most part hear anything about specific sacred sites they visited or of any rituals that they may have performed there. We do hear about al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik's visit to the mosque, but the sources only state that this was to inspect the (re-)construction work that he had famously ordered a few years earlier. Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) mentions in passing, on al-Wāqidi's (d. 207/822) authority, that al-Walid approached the Prophet's tomb enclosure, but adds no further details.⁷⁰

Similarly, we hear about a significant number of visits to Medina by early Abbasid caliphs – Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75) and Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–93/786–809) went there on several occasions

⁶⁸ For some of the narrative evidence of pilgrims to Mecca during the Umayyad caliphate alone, see McMillan, *Meaning of Mecca*.

⁶⁹ See the further discussions of their visits to Medina in Chapters 4 and 6.

⁷⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1233. Al-Wāqidi's ultimate source, in turn, was Ṣāliḥ b. Kaysān, one of the agents who oversaw the work ordered by al-Walid on the Prophet's Mosque.

each, and Muḥammad al-Mahdī (r. 158–69/775–85) once in 160/777 – but again we rarely hear about any specific pilgrimage rites or actions that they undertook there, with one important exception. The *Kitāb al-Imāma wa-al-siyāsa*, wrongly attributed to Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) and perhaps compiled during the fourth/tenth century, notes that: ‘They recount that in the year 174 [790–1 CE], Hārūn left for Mecca to perform the *ḥajj*. He came to Medina to visit the grave of the Prophet (ṣ) and sent for Mālik b. Anas.’⁷¹ That Hārūn performed a *ziyāra*, ‘visitation’, to Muḥammad’s tomb enclosure is also noted in an instructional anecdote preserved by al-Kulaynī.⁷² According to a supposedly autobiographical anecdote by al-Wāqidi, preserved by his student Ibn Sa’d (d. 230/845), Hārūn al-Rashīd was also interested in visiting some of the other sites in Medina on the occasion of one of his visits to the town.⁷³ After one of al-Manṣūr’s visits, when he led the *ḥajj* of 140/758, he returned via Jerusalem and prayed there;⁷⁴ this journey thus has the feel of an extended pilgrimage that took in three of the holiest Islamic towns – Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem – although no explicit evidence exists for referring to his excursion to Medina that year as a ‘pilgrimage’ specifically.

In spite of the dearth of information about any ritual activities caliphs performed at sites within Medina’s sacred landscape, it seems reasonable to infer from the evidence of some of their patronage of monuments at such locations that they expected pilgrims to visit them. In Chapter 4, I investigated the substantial efforts caliphs and their governors undertook over the second/eighth century to commemorate architecturally a number of sites associated with Muḥammad, his family and Companions and such work is quite likely to have encouraged pilgrims, as well as perhaps responding to their interests and demands. There is also a relatively large amount of information in historical sources about improvements caliphs made to the travel infrastructure of the Ḥijāz, and there can be little doubt that the encouragement of pilgrimage was a key interest of caliphs in undertaking such work.

Much of this development of infrastructure, particularly during the Abbasid period, concerned the famous trade and pilgrim road from Baghdad/Kufa to Mecca, known to posterity after the wife of Hārūn

⁷¹ Ibn Qutayba (attrib.), *al-Imāma wa-al-siyāsa*, II, 292.

⁷² Al-Kulaynī, *Kāfi*, IV, 553.

⁷³ There is further discussion of this in Chapter 6.

⁷⁴ Ibn Qutayba, *Māʾarīf*, 378; al-Fasawī, *al-Maʾrifa wa-al-tārikh*, I, 123; al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhhār al-tiwāl*, 383; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārikh*, II, 444–5; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh*, III, 129; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārikh madīnat Dimashq*, XXXII, 299, 310.

al-Rashīd as the Darb Zubayda.⁷⁵ It is not clear how much of the work on this particular route would have encouraged the visitation of Medina as well as Mecca. Some of the infrastructure work undertaken in Medina by al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, however, does seem to have been specifically aimed at providing for visitors/pilgrims to that town. He is said to have ordered his governor, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, to make the mountain passes into Medina more easily traversable (*tashīl al-ṭhanāyā*), to have wells dug in the town and to construct a fountain (*fawwāra*). When he visited Medina he gave orders for attendants (*quwwām*, sing. *qā'im*) to be put in place for this fountain and for those who visited or worked in the Prophet's Mosque (*ahl al-masjid*) to be able to use it for drinking water.⁷⁶ There is no documentary evidence for this Marwanid infrastructural work in the Ḥijāz, but there is a close parallel in an inscribed marker, found in 1961 by the southern shore of the Sea of Galilee and erected during the caliphate of al-Walīd's father, 'Abd al-Malik (r. 65–86/685–705), probably in 73/692, which commemorates work making an unnamed mountain pass near there more easily traversable (*tashīl hādhibi al-'aqaba*).⁷⁷ We can presume that similar commemorative waymarks would have been erected on the road to Medina to celebrate al-Walīd's and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz's work there.⁷⁸

Aside from evidence for caliphal visits to Medina and their sacralisation and monumentalisation of certain sites there, there is also some anecdotal evidence here and there for the practice of pilgrimage to Muḥammad's grave during the first couple of Islamic centuries. At least five such anecdotes seem relatively meaningful and they will be presented here in chronological order of the events purportedly described. To start with, at least four authors of the third–fifth/ninth–eleventh centuries reported a story in which al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714), governor first of the Ḥijāz and then Iraq and the East for the caliphs 'Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd, exclaimed when he witnessed people circumambulating

⁷⁵ Al-Rashīd, *Darb Zubaydah*.

⁷⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, II, 1195–6.

⁷⁷ Sharon, 'Arabic inscription'. For the broader context of this inscription, see Elad, 'Southern Golan'.

⁷⁸ The early Abbasid caliphs who were behind much of the work on the trade and pilgrim route connecting Kufa/Baghdad and Mecca – the so-called Darb Zubayda – certainly set up milestones at regular intervals along that road, at least five of which have been found; see al-Rashīd, 'New 'Abbāsid milestone'. It is also reported that the Abbasid caliph Ja'far al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–47/847–61) ordered milestones erected on the Mecca to Medina road; see al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, III, 443–4.

(*yaṭūfūna*) the Prophet's grave, 'They are only circumambulating bits of wood (*a'wād*, variant *khashabāt*) and decayed remains (*rimma*).'⁷⁹ In a later, more scandalous version of the story, al-Ḥajjāj recommends that instead these pilgrims circumambulate the caliph's palace (*qaṣr amīr al-mu'minīn*): 'Do they not know that a man's caliph is better than his messenger?'⁸⁰ This story is probably simply invective against al-Ḥajjāj, a common interest in Arabic literature, but if there is any historical basis to it at all then it may suggest that there was a time when the practice of pilgrims at Muḥammad's grave was to circumambulate the structure, an act that played no part in later discussions, even by those scholars who supported pilgrimage to that location.

Secondly, in a handful of sources an anecdote appears concerning the life of the Ḥijāzī poet 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a (d. either 93/711–12 or 103/721–2), in which the latter told a Medinan noble woman who had summoned him to the town – identified in some versions as the famous socialite Sukayna bt. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī – that he had come originally intending to visit the Prophet's grave.⁸¹

Thirdly, little more than half a century later, when Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr dispatched his cousin, 'Īsā b. Mūsā, in 145/762 to crush the revolt in Medina of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh 'the Pure Soul' (*al-naḥs al-zakiyya*), he gave him orders to treat the town and its population with care. According to one source, al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892), he stated: 'You will be travelling to God's *ḥaram* where there are three classes of people', the third of whom were 'merchants who came to be neighbours of the Prophet's grave and reside in his *ḥaram*.'⁸²

Fourthly, within al-Ṭabarī's account of the revolt in Medina in 169/786 of the Hasanid al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, the latter gave a sermon in the Prophet's Mosque from Muḥammad's *minbar* in which he declared:

O people! I am the son of the Messenger of God, in the *ḥaram* of the Messenger of God, in the mosque of the Messenger of God, atop the *minbar* of the Prophet

⁷⁹ Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, I, 288; Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq*, 188; Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, v, 310; al-Ābī, *Natḥ al-durr*, v, 38.

⁸⁰ Ibn Abī al-Ḥādīd, *Sharḥ naḥj al-balāgha*, xv, 242; see also Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 28–9.

⁸¹ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-asḥrāf*, ed. al-'Azīm, viii, 305–6; with greater elaboration in Abū al-Faraj, *Aghānī*, I, 105, 161; II, 376–7.

⁸² Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-asḥrāf*, 2, 512–13: *tujjār jāwarū qabr al-nabī (ṣ) wa-aqāmū fi ḥaramihi*. Another anecdote, related by al-Mubarrad (*Kāmil*, II, 784–5), concerning the early Marwanid period also has someone express a longing to remain in Medina residing in close proximity to Muḥammad's grave.

of God. I summon you to the Book of God and the *sunna* of His Prophet (ṣ). If I should not keep my promise to you regarding that, then I have no claim on your allegiance (*fa-lā bay'a li fi a'nāqikum*).⁸³

According to al-Ṭabarī's sources, when this sermon was delivered:

The pilgrims (*ahl al-ziyāra*) that year were numerous and had filled the mosque. All of a sudden, a man with a handsome face, tall stature and wearing a red-dyed cloak, stood up, took the hand of his son – a handsome, well-built youth – and stepped over the people's necks until he came to the *minbar*. He approached Husayn and said, 'Son of the Messenger of God! I departed from a faraway land together with this son of mine, seeking to perform the *hajj* to God's House and the visitation to the grave of His Prophet (ṣ), without ever imagining that this affair involving you would come to pass (*wa-mā yakhtiru bi-bālī hādha al-amr alladhī ḥadatha minka*). I have heard what you said; will you fulfil what you have placed upon yourself?' 'Yes', he replied. 'Then extend your hand so I can offer you my allegiance.'⁸⁴

Finally, the early Abbasid poet Abū Wā'il Bakr b. al-Naṭṭāh, who found employ in the service of the *amīr* Abū Dulaf al-Qāsim b. 'Īsā al-Ṭijlī (d. 225–8/839–43), introduced a *qaṣīda*, 'ode', with a *nasīb* based around rituals performed during the *hajj* to Mecca. As part of this, he urged: 'Pass by the Prophet's grave and heap upon him greetings and prayers.'⁸⁵

CONCLUSIONS: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PILGRIMAGE

In spite of the difficulties, it would seem that there is enough evidence to suggest that pilgrims were making their way to Medina to see the sites there connected with Muḥammad's career at least from the second/eighth century. It would also make perfect theoretical sense for early Muslims to seek some form of physical association with such foundational sites for their faith; this is something that we can observe in other religious traditions.⁸⁶ That said, no practice or ritual associated with pilgrimage to Medina seems to have been uncontroversial in the early centuries, and many that later became famous – such as the visitation to Muḥammad's tomb enclosure – were barely discussed for a surprisingly long time. Only

⁸³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 564; see also Abū al-Faraj, *Maqātil al-ṭālibiyyīn*, 447–8.

⁸⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 564; see also the related report about Mubārak al-Turkī in Abū al-Faraj, *Maqātil al-ṭālibiyyīn*, 448–9.

⁸⁵ Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Tabaqāt al-shu'arā*, 220. On this poet, see *EP*, s.v. 'Bakr b. al-Naṭṭāh' (C. Pellat).

⁸⁶ One well-studied example is Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem in late antiquity; for another, see Deeg, *Places where Siddhārtha Trod*; Shinohara, 'Story'.

occasionally did the eventual discussions of pilgrimage to Medina insist on any obligation of that act.⁸⁷ It is for this reason that we have hardly any information on any specific rituals performed before the fourth-/tenth-century 'guides' for Imāmī Shī'a found within works by al-Kulaynī and Ibn Bābawayh. We should assume that pilgrimages to Medina took place, but not that we might come to learn much about them.

So what is the significance of the discussion in this chapter? To begin with, it is curious that there is no neat overlap between many of those keen promoters of Medina's *ḥaram* encountered in Chapter 3 and those who first encouraged pilgrimage to the town. The famous collections of Mālik b. Anas, 'Abd al-Razzāq, Ibn Abī Shayba, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī and others, which are such important sources for our study of the emergence of Medina's *ḥaram*, are relatively quiet when it comes to the origins of pilgrimage practices involving the town. Not a single one of them includes any form of unambiguous promotion of the practice of visiting Muḥammad's grave to pray for him and greet him there; many in fact contain *ḥadīths* which seem to argue against that practice. Even the earliest local historians of Medina whose works are known in any detail, Ibn Zabāla and 'Umar b. Shabba, do not appear to have been nearly as interested in transmitting reports which specifically urged pilgrimage to the town as their Mamluk-era counterparts. On the flip side, a few of those who firmly promoted pilgrimage to Medina – such as al-Kulaynī and Ibn Bābawayh – are also among those who included in their works traditions which cast doubt on the sanctity of Medina's *ḥaram*, at least when compared with Mecca's. We will return in the next chapter to the question of why the continued existence of Medina's *ḥaram* appears to have been the cause of such controversy; for now, we are left with the slightly unusual situation in which some groups of scholars who promoted the sanctity of this particular space were, at the same time, either simply not interested in encouraging pilgrimage to visit it and perform specific rituals there, or even actively tried to discourage others from doing so. All of this begins to cast some doubt on any assumptions that the upholding of Medina's *ḥaram* and the promotion of any practices of pilgrimage to the town were necessarily

⁸⁷ The principal exception is those few *ḥadīths* which proclaim that Muslims who perform the *hajj* and do not visit Muḥammad's grave have treated him harshly; see the discussions in al-Subkī, *Shifā al-saqām*, 127–30, 155–7; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā al-wafā*, v, 17–18, 27–9. These *ḥadīths* bring to mind Victor Turner's suggestion that: '[W]hen one starts with obligation, voluntariness comes in; when one begins with voluntariness, obligation tends to enter the scene'; see his 'Center out there', 199.

mutually reinforcing objectives, as might be said of the sites in Mecca and the *hajj*. We should also remain open to the idea that for some of those who insisted on the existence of a *ḥaram* in Medina, the fact that Muḥammad's grave was in the town may have been largely irrelevant, although, of course, the fact that they did not promote pilgrimage to that location does not necessarily mean that they did not believe it to be a sacred site.

Gradually this situation did change, and from the fourth/tenth century onwards there was much more widespread, although never universal, support for pilgrimage to Medina. In large part, this development reflects increasingly widespread scholarly support for a practice, or practices, that were being undertaken anyway. In light of modern research that has highlighted the close relationship between the performance of ritual actions and the acknowledgement of the authority that prescribes those actions, there should be little surprise that a great many Sunnī and Shīʿī scholars and rulers came round to encouraging pilgrimage to Medina eventually.⁸⁸ Furthermore, Medina's proximity to Mecca, and especially the fact that it was either on or fairly close to those pilgrimage routes which carried the greatest traffic, presumably played no small part in both the earliest emergence of pilgrims who wished to visit the town and its sites and the practice's gradual acceptance by ever more scholars. M. J. Kister has shown how common a feature it was in Islamic history for those who wanted to promote the sanctity of a particular place to try to link it in somehow to the already established sanctity of another location.⁸⁹ Thus it was, for example, that some who promoted the sanctity of Jerusalem recommended performing the *iḥrām*, loosely translated as 'sanctification ritual', for the *hajj* or '*umra* there before setting out for Mecca.⁹⁰ I mentioned earlier in this chapter that the Medinan pilgrimage guides of al-Kulaynī and Ibn Bābawayh included sections outlining whether one should visit Medina either before or after a *hajj* or '*umra* to Mecca, which was a clear attempt to link the pilgrimage to the former with the latter. We also saw that al-Māwardī, in his *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, encouraged the *hajj* leaders to take the pilgrims to Medina

⁸⁸ See also Wheeler, *Mecca and Eden*, esp. 71–98. It should be expressed clearly that I do not see any meaningful value to envisaging attitudes towards pilgrimage to Medina as reflecting a dichotomy between elite and popular religious practices, for the simple reason that we do not have nearly enough evidence that allows us to distinguish the two; see further the reservations in Brown, *Cult of Saints*, 12–22, 26–33.

⁸⁹ Kister, 'Sanctity joint and divided'.

⁹⁰ Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 64–5.

after the completion of the rites in Mecca so that they might perform there the visitation of Muḥammad's grave.

Such linkages of sacred space did not go unchallenged. Ibn Waddāḥ included in his anti-*bida'* work a report expressing criticism of those who gathered in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina to celebrate the day of 'Arafa during the *hajj* season.⁹¹ The emergence of pilgrimage to Medina, nonetheless, was connected in no small degree to the continuing popularity of the *hajj* to Mecca, in a much clearer and fuller way than the recognition of Medina as a *ḥaram* was to Mecca's own established *ḥaram*. The Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik may have originally conceived, at least in part, of his new Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem as a way of diverting there, to Syria's holy city, pilgrims who would otherwise have visited Mecca and the Hijāz, which was for a long time under the control of his caliphal rival, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr.⁹² His son and successor al-Walid, however, had no such scheme in mind behind his massive overhaul of the central mosque in Medina and physical commemoration within that new structure of the graves of Muḥammad, Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Medina's recognition as a pilgrimage location built on the establishment of virtually universal Muslim recognition of Mecca's status as such.

The significance of pilgrimage in the Islamic world is not merely a question of whether scholars accepted such practices. A great many people must have gone through a degree of inconvenience, spent a considerable sum of money and travelled hundreds of miles to visit sites in Medina associated with the Prophetic career of Muḥammad and the lives of his closest associates. Why would they do this? Again, our best evidence is for the caliphs. The next chapter presents a more thorough investigation of their motives in taking efforts to appear as beneficent patrons of Medina in general, but here some hypotheses on their motives in visiting the town seem requisite. When caliphs visited Medina, they almost always did so as part of their periodic personal leadership of the *hajj* ceremonies in Mecca. The heavily ritualised nature of the public projection of caliphal authority and power has been well demonstrated recently by Andrew Marsham, and his work has made it clear that leadership of the

⁹¹ Ibn Waddāḥ, *Bida'*, 190. For an eighth-/fourteenth-century criticism of the practice of directly combining pilgrimages to more than one holy city, see Sadan, 'Legal opinion', 240-4.

⁹² See especially, with further bibliography, Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 158-63; idem, 'Why did 'Abd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock?'; idem, 'Abd al-Malik'. A relatively recent summary of research on the original construction of the Dome of the Rock is Grabar, *Dome of the Rock*, 59-119.

hajj rites in particular was closely associated with the issue of caliphal succession.⁹³ If we assume that at least some rituals connected to sites associated with Muḥammad were conducted by the caliphs and their representatives in Medina as well, then the visit to that town either before or after Mecca would have had its part to play in their ritual exercise of legitimate authority.

It is also possible to understand these caliphal journeys to the Ḥijāz, including Medina, along the model of royal progresses;⁹⁴ or, perhaps, as Antoine Borrut has recently suggested for caliphal leadership of the *hajj*, a form of itinerant kingship.⁹⁵ That rulers of any geographically large empire have often wished to show off their power to their subjects who lived far away from their usual residences is well established. The Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs were no different, and Medina, as the residency of a small number of very important aristocratic families, was an important town in which they might show their faces once in a while.⁹⁶ Narrative accounts of their trips, discussed briefly earlier and further in Chapter 6, often mention that they dealt with petitions and, more important, dispensed large sums of cash when they came to Medina. This certainly seems to conform with the idea that at least one of the reasons caliphs travelled in person to the Ḥijāz was to display their regality to the inhabitants of that region first-hand. In general, to whichever of these models we choose to subscribe, Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphal visits to Medina would seem to have been one of a number of activities they undertook to display their fulfilment of the fundamental ritual duties of the office of God's Caliph.

Why 'ordinary' people – by which I essentially mean anyone who was not in a position of authority of one kind or another which could be buttressed by appearing in Medina – performed pilgrimages to the town and its sites is much less clear. Of course, different people perform pilgrimages for a variety of reasons, often quite personal, but it is possible

⁹³ Marsham, *Rituals*, esp. 90–1, 124–5 for the comments on *hajj* leadership. On the Umayyads and Mecca, as well as McMillan, *Meaning of Mecca*, see Donner, 'Umayyad efforts', 199–201.

⁹⁴ These have been studied by, among many others, Geertz, 'Centers', for example 153: 'When kings journey around the countryside, making appearances, attending fetes, conferring honors, exchanging gifts, or defying rivals, they mark it, like some wolf or tiger spreading his scent through his territory, as almost physically part of them.'

⁹⁵ Borrut, review of McMillan, *Meaning of Mecca*, 572. For a suggestion that the Umayyads exercised a form of itinerant kingship in Syria, see also Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir*, 396–443.

⁹⁶ On the histories of five of these families, see Ahmed, *Religious Elite*.

nonetheless to outline some generalities.⁹⁷ Previous scholarship on the *hajj* to Mecca has suggested that many pilgrims there believed in the ritual efficacy of what they were doing and understood many of the specific rites they performed in terms of mythical re-enactment.⁹⁸ It seems that some efficacy was attached to the fulfilment of the *ziyāra* to Medina: the *ḥadīths* generally suggest that undertaking such a pilgrimage could help one's chances in the world to come. There is very little indication in our sources, composed largely by religious scholars, that the efficacy of pilgrimage to Medina was held to have much of an impact in worldly affairs too, but then we know so little in any case about the ritual practices in the Hijāz of anyone who was not a scholar or a caliph. The acquisition of *baraka*, 'blessing', seems to have been an important source of motivation for other *ziyārāt* in the Islamic world and so we might expect it to have been so in this instance too.⁹⁹ The story about the stone in the Masjid Banī Zafar as well as accounts of what went on at other shrines during later periods in, for example, Syria and Egypt would suggest that we should bear this motivation in mind.¹⁰⁰ Because the principal sites in Medina's sacred landscape were connected in some way with the careers of the Prophet and his Companions, then some kind of attachment of ritual re-enactment to any pilgrimage rites performed there would be a reasonable assumption.

The work of Victor Turner on pilgrimage has also stressed the twin ideas of 'liminality' and 'communitas' as key parts of ritual activities. Sacred spaces and pilgrimage locations are liminal spaces in the sense that they are somewhat otherworldly, between the natural world and the sacred realm; and 'communitas' refers to the fact that many traditional societal norms of behaviour and social organisation cease to function fully within the zones of liminality.¹⁰¹ Turner's research may seem to fit well with the circumstances of some pilgrimages, for example the *hajj* to Mecca as some pilgrims and scholars have reported them: the liminality of Mecca and its hinterland is reinforced by the 'sanctification rites' (*iḥrām*) that must be performed before entry, and the communitas is emphasised by the fact that Muslims of all ranks and classes must perform mostly the

⁹⁷ For example, Wheeler, 'Models', 35: 'The desire for sacred journey encompasses as many motives as the imagination holds.'

⁹⁸ See, with discussion of earlier scholarship, Katz, 'Hajj'.

⁹⁹ In general, see Meri, *Cult of Saints*, esp. 12–58.

¹⁰⁰ For pilgrimages to other shrines, see the references in note 1.

¹⁰¹ See esp. Turner, 'Center out there'. For more detail on his understanding of 'liminality' and 'communitas', see also Turner, *Ritual Process*, 94–130.

same rites and at the same times. It is less clear, however, that these ideas work so well for any early Islamic practices of pilgrimage to Medina.¹⁰² Medina's sacred sites can certainly be understood as liminal. To take just the *ḥaram* as a whole, the existence of boundary rituals for entry into it may have been less universally accepted than those for Mecca, but the fact that many considered the oasis a *ḥaram* with associated rules and regulations nonetheless emphasises its liminality. The sites commemorating Muḥammad's career can also be understood as liminal places situated between two times, the prophetic past and the post-prophetic present.¹⁰³

The strength of *communitas* in Medina was, however, presumably less than the case for Mecca's *ḥajj*. What became the principal pilgrimage site in Medina was the grave of a man – or, more accurately, three men – who had descendants, many of whom presumably felt that they had a closer attachment to the location than others. This actually comes across clearly in one of the most commonly and earliest cited *ḥadīths* which may have encouraged the practice: in 'Abd al-Razzāq's version of the report that Ibn 'Umar would, whenever he returned to Medina from a journey, go to the Prophet's grave, this individual would greet Muḥammad and Abū Bakr by name but then, naturally enough, address 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb simply as 'father'.¹⁰⁴ Now Turner did himself acknowledge the limits of *communitas*, but still suggested that 'while the pilgrimage situation does not eliminate structural divisions, it attenuates them, removes their sting'.¹⁰⁵ We do not know enough about the early Islamic pilgrimage rites in Medina to be sure, but it seems as though the sting would not have been removed all that fully.

¹⁰² For a more general critique of Turner's explanation of pilgrimage, see Wheeler, 'Models'. Wheeler prefers to see in pilgrimage a process of constant negotiation between *communitas* and conflicting social boundaries, which she terms 'confluence'.

¹⁰³ See, for example, Flood, 'Faith, Religion', 249, regarding the architectural commemoration of sites at which the Prophet had prayed: 'Such commemorative artifacts collapsed space and time, making the historical Prophet accessible to the pious long after his death, even outside of Arabia.'

¹⁰⁴ 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, III, 576.

¹⁰⁵ Turner, 'Center out there', 219–21 (quote from 221).

The Prophet's Inheritance: Medina's Emergence as a Holy City in the First-Third/Seventh-Ninth Centuries

The preceding chapters of this book have addressed the roles two groups within society – on the one hand, caliphs, their governors and dependants; on the other, scholars active in a variety of disciplines – played in the establishment of sacred spaces at Medina over the early Islamic centuries. To do this, we have looked at three separate albeit related developments. Firstly, we saw that Muḥammad created a form of legally recognised sacred space, a *ḥaram*, somewhere in Medina, after his *hijra* from Mecca. After his death, this *ḥaram* was resumed and expanded, and some groups of scholars altered its precise significance, while at the same time others questioned its very existence. Secondly, local historians articulated a commemorative sacred landscape for Medina as the caliphs and their representatives patronised a built environment of shrines at places associated with the memory of the Prophet's career. Thirdly, caliphs and some scholars encouraged pilgrimage to some of these sites, although others questioned the propriety of such practices. All three of these developments were key ingredients in the successful establishment of Medina as a widely venerated Islamic holy city. In this final chapter, I will turn to the question of why these caliphs and scholars invested in the promotion of Medina's sacred spaces and the town's overall holiness, while others sought to undermine some of the ways through which they did so.

Perhaps the closest thing modern scholarship has to a better appreciation of this question came in an article published in 1984 by Albert Arazi.¹ Arazi was not concerned directly with the question of the emergence of Medina's sanctity and its holy sites, but rather with investigating

¹ Arazi, 'Matériaux'.

the origins of the *faḍā'il al-Madīna* literature, that is works whose primary purpose was to praise Medina and highlight the town's distinctive merits. In particular, Arazi was interested in those traditions which sought to compare Medina favourably to Mecca and in the development of a specific genre of 'competition literature' between Mecca and Medina. Nonetheless, I wish to consider briefly here his principal conclusions on this question, because the origins of the *faḍā'il al-Madīna* literature may safely be assumed to have been linked closely to the town's emerging sanctity. *Haram* traditions and reports about sites in Medina associated with the Prophet are certainly a key part of the *faḍā'il al-Madīna* literature. Arazi's research suggested that both economic and political factors were at play in the emergence of the *faḍā'il* literature, and that as Medina's economic and political circumstances declined steadily over the first two or three centuries AH, some inhabitants of the town attempted to remedy the situation by spreading *ḥadīths* in which the Prophet is said to have heaped praise upon it.

MEDINA'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION AFTER MUḤAMMAD

a) The Economy

I will not spend much time here on Medina's economic situation during the centuries after Muḥammad's death, because this has been dealt with in some detail elsewhere. A brief survey of the principal trends may nonetheless be helpful here.² In general, the paucity of archaeological and documentary material – with the crucial exception of early Islamic Arabic epigraphy, mostly but not all graffiti – from the Ḥijāz ensures that studying the economic situation of Medina during the early Islamic centuries remains difficult. This probably explains why modern scholars have come up with such conflicting opinions on whether the Ḥijāz's economy, generally speaking, improved or declined over the decades and centuries following the onset of the Umayyad dynasty in Syria roughly in 41/661.³

² The following is drawn from my forthcoming article, 'Trends in the economic history'. Detailed further evidence and bibliography for this section is offered there.

³ Against Arazi's argument of a gradual decline starting in the first/seventh century, see, for example, Heck, 'Gold mining', and Landau-Tasseron, 'Arabia', esp. 400: 'It was only after the middle of the third/ninth century that conditions in the Ḥijāz really deteriorated.'

In spite of the seemingly dire situation, what material evidence there is can be combined with some of the literary sources to paint a relatively convincing picture. This picture makes it increasingly difficult to argue that the Hijāz, and Medina more specifically, underwent any major economic problems before at least the mid-to-late third/ninth century. The local histories of Medina, as well as other sources, provide anecdotal information about landed estates and other commercial properties around the town, especially for the Umayyad period. Further research into this material is certainly necessary, but the general image is of increased cultivation, including in lands uncultivated during pre-Islamic times.⁴ Much recent work on metal mining sites in the Hijāz – using both literary accounts and some study of material remains – has reasonably suggested that the first three Islamic centuries were the main period of activity in that field as well.⁵ Such as it is, the evidence suggests that significant although not enormous quantities of precious metals were being mined in the early Islamic northern Hijāz and western Najd, and Medina's inhabitants would probably have benefitted economically from this until the closure of the mines, which broadly seems to have started in the mid third/ninth century. If, and this is debatable, the number and spread of published Arabic graffiti in the settlements along the trade and pilgrim routes to the north and northeast of Medina can also be taken as evidence for the relative prosperity of sites, then these would help to confirm this general picture: the vast majority of dated texts are from the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries.

Now, the Hijāz and Medina are hardly likely to have followed a continual line of either economic growth or decline throughout the long period in question across all areas. There were some serious temporary environmental problems in the Hijāz, especially flooding, and some ferocious crises in this period, including the seven-year drought that came during the reign of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 105–25/724–43).⁶ Such isolated crises, however, did not cause widespread, long-term economic collapse in the area (for now at least), and although certain settlements largely disappeared after the mid first/seventh century as trade – and increasingly pilgrimage – routes shifted, other settlements arose and prospered: compare, for example, the apparent decline of Dūmat al-Jandal and the

⁴ Al-'Alī, 'Milkiyyāt al-arāḍī'; Kister, 'Battle of the Ḥarra'.

⁵ See esp. Heck, 'Gold mining', although he takes the evidence too far; for my discussion of this, see Munt, 'Trends in the economic history'.

⁶ Arazi, 'Matériaux', esp. 194–5.

emergent prosperity of al-Rabadha.⁷ This suggests that the regional economy of the Hijāz as a whole stayed the course remarkably well for most of the first three centuries AH, and very little evidence exists to suggest that Medina specifically did not share in this trend. Economic decline did eventually begin to set in, but only during the later third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, as we can see in the relative decline in the numbers of epigraphic texts published from these centuries, literary and archaeological evidence for the abandonment of areas of some settlements, and increasing reports in historical sources of price fluctuations, environmental difficulties that were not dealt with particularly well, and raids on Hijāzī towns and pilgrim caravans by the (semi-)nomadic inhabitants of the region.

By this point, however, it would be too late for these economic problems to have had much impact on the wider debates about Medina's sanctity, because many earlier scholars were already involved and propagating relevant *ḥadīths* and narratives. Many of the *faḍā'il* traditions Arazi analysed in his article were also clearly in circulation before this date; Arazi himself attributes, rather optimistically, the 'codification' of many such reports to 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. ca. 93–4/711–13) and his son, Hishām (d. 146/763–4).⁸ For the thesis of economic decline leading to the circulation of traditions in favour of Medina's sanctity to be convincing, it would have to be demonstrated that many areas of Medina's economy did indeed see prolonged periods of trouble before the mid third/ninth century. Arazi did try to do this, but the significant amount of new material that has become available since the publication of his article does not seem to support the case he made back in 1984. Furthermore, it would have to be established that those individuals who involved themselves in the debate were among those affected during any period of economic difficulty. Future research may see important progress in outlining more precisely who the economically successful and unsuccessful were in Medina, but for the moment it seems that such a detailed demonstration is not really possible.

b) Politics

What then of Medina's political situation after the final victory of Mu'āwiya b. Abi Sufyān over 'Alī b. Abi Ṭālib in 41/661? Modern scholarship seems

⁷ On which, see respectively al-Muaiḳel, *Study*, and al-Rashid, *al-Rabadhah*.

⁸ Arazi, 'Matériaux', 184–97.

less divided on the question of Medina's 'political decline', and suggestions that the town, with the Ḥijāz in general, suffered politically after the transferral of the caliphate to the newly conquered territories in the north following the murder of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān in 35/656 can be found widely throughout the secondary literature; one study even refers to the late Umayyad Ḥijāz as 'the Western Arabian backwater'.⁹ The heuristic value of some of these general statements of political decline, however, often seems rather limited. If by 'political decline', it is simply meant that the caliphs no longer resided in Medina, then there can be no argument with the basic statement. Yet does it really matter, for our purposes, that the caliphs themselves no longer resided in Medina? It would be unreasonable to deny the enormous impact that the establishment of a caliphal centre in a city could have on the immediate area's economic and cultural prosperity; one may simply consider the brief but phenomenal rise of Samarra.¹⁰ That said, it is no less important for being obvious that caliphal residency was not the only reason a province could be considered politically important. During the Umayyad period, the caliphs did not reside in Iraq, but that is rightly considered a crucial province in the history of the period's politics. 'Abd Allāh al-Ma'mūn's (r. 198–218/813–33) brief stint in Marw until 202/817 aside, caliphs never resided in Khurāsān, but one could hardly call that a political backwater. Everett Rowson expressed the sentiments of much modern research when he noted that after Ibn al-Zubayr's defeat in 73/692, 'the political significance of the Ḥijāz was reduced to an occasional futile rebellion'.¹¹ Several others, however, have now demonstrated that Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan's revolt in Medina in 145/762, in spite of its ultimately easy defeat, was a much more significant threat to the early Abbasids' authority than this would imply.¹²

More important and interesting, I would argue, than simple statements about the transferral of the caliphal centre to Syria and then Iraq is whether developments in the balance of power between the central imperial authorities and the provincial elites in the Ḥijāz could have led to clear feelings of resentment among Medinans at having in some way lost

⁹ See Blankinship, *End of the Jihād State*, 73–5 and Arazi, 'Matériaux'. See also, among many other examples, Lassner, 'Provincial administration'; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 34; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 191.

¹⁰ Robinson, ed., *Medieval Islamic City*; Northedge, *Historical Topography*. See also the brief comments in Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir*, 402.

¹¹ Rowson, 'Effeminates', 671.

¹² Lassner, 'Provincial administration'; Elad, 'Rebellion'.

out. The shifting relationships between central and provincial elites has been very fruitfully studied for some regions of the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphates.¹³ The nature of the evidence for the Ḥijāz is rather different to that for many of these other regions, but a very important start in understanding the roles some Ḥijāzī elite families played, on the basis of a prosopographical study of five key families, has recently been published by Asad Ahmed.¹⁴ In this section, I will make a few broad points of my own about developments in the sociopolitical roles Medina's elites played, before returning to the significance of Ahmed's conclusions.

One way of looking at Medinan elites' relative political importance within the Ḥijāz is to investigate the significance attached to the office of the town's governor. Medina frequently, although not always, appears as the principal administrative centre in the Ḥijāz, at least in terms of the importance of its governor. A passage in al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) history demonstrates this nicely:

When Mu'āwiya wanted to appoint a man from the Banū Ḥarb¹⁵ as a governor, he would appoint him governor of al-Ṭā'if. If he thought that he had done well and not surprised him, he would appoint him governor of Mecca as well. If he continued to govern well and did what he was appointed to do (*wa-qāma bimā wulliya qiyām^m ḥasan^m*), he would give him Medina in addition to those two [towns].¹⁶

It is hard to know whether this report accurately reflects the state of affairs in Mu'āwiya's day or at a later time. Nonetheless, Arazi suggested that Mecca overtook Medina as the centre of primary political importance in the Ḥijāz in 103/721–2, and this could give us reason to doubt this.¹⁷ A much later source, Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176), suggested that during the reign of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, the governor of Medina, Ibrāhīm b. Hishām, controlled all the land between that town and Aden on the coast of the Arabian Sea.¹⁸ Earlier sources offer some confirmation for this by noting that for much of the time between 103/721–2 and 114/732–3, and again between 118/736–7 and 135/752–3, the governor of Medina was also responsible at the very least for Mecca and

¹³ On Egypt and the Jazīra, see esp. Kennedy, 'Central government', and Robinson, *Empire and Elites*; see also the valuable and wide-ranging observations in Crone, *Slaves on Horses*.

¹⁴ Ahmed, *Religious Elite*.

¹⁵ Ḥarb was Mu'āwiya's grandfather.

¹⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, II, 167.

¹⁷ Arazi, 'Matériaux', 195.

¹⁸ Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh*, XXXI, 17.

al-Ṭā'if;¹⁹ anecdotal evidence suggests that for these governors of Medina, Mecca and al-Ṭā'if, the former was frequently the primary seat of power. Muḥammad b. Khalaf Wakī (d. 306/918) provides some evidence that as late as al-Ma'mūn's reign the administrative area that included Medina, Mecca and Yemen was known as 'al-Madīna'.²⁰

Against this evidence in support of Medina's continuing regional primacy, however, is the fact that roughly from the time of Mūsā al-Hādī's (r. 169–70/785–6) reign onwards, annalists such as Khalifa b. Khayyāt (d. ca. 240/854–5) and al-Ṭabarī noted the appointments of governors of Mecca much more regularly than they did governors of Medina.²¹ The numismatic record for the Ḥijāz is notoriously patchy, but such as it is it also offers some support for Mecca's increasing administrative prominence during the Abbasid period. The earliest coins associated with minting in the Ḥijāz are a few rare *dīnārs* dated to 91/709–10, 92/710–11 and 105/723–4, which bear either the legend *ma'dīn amīr al-mu'minīn* ('the mine of the Commander of the Faithful') or *ma'dīn amīr al-mu'minīn bi-al-Ḥijāz* ('the mine of the Commander of the Faithful in the Ḥijāz'). This legend has been associated with Ma'dīn Banī Sulaym, but it has been persuasively suggested that these coins were actually struck either in Damascus for use in the Ḥijāz or in the Ḥijāz from dies brought from Damascus. There was also a copper issue, which Album has described as 'moderately rare', with the legend *al-madīna ma'dīn amīr al-mu'minīn* ('the city [or Medina], the mine of the Commander of the Faithful').²² From the Abbasid period, there is a single copper bearing the mint name *al-Ḥijāz* dated to 185/801–2, but the mintmark on three *dirhams* minted in 194/809–10, 201/816–17 and 203/818–19 is explicitly Mecca.²³

In any case, it is usually clear enough that a governorship in many other provinces, especially in Iraq, was considered a promotion from one in any town in the Ḥijāz, and such a post would have offered its

¹⁹ See the information on the governors for these years in al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, where it is usually provided at the end of the entry for each year; also see Khalifa, *Tārīkh*, 332, 357, 366, 370, 406–7, 412–13, 430–1 (where the details differ slightly from al-Ṭabarī's).

²⁰ Wakī, *Akbbār*, i, 257.

²¹ As a potential counterpoint, however, it is worth remembering that in his *Akbbār al-quḍāt*, Wakī dedicated one hundred and fifty-one pages in the modern edition (i, 111–261) to the Umayyad and Abbasid judges of Medina, but only nine (i, 261–9) to those of Mecca and al-Ṭā'if together.

²² See in general Shammā, 'al-Madīna'; idem, 'Nuqūd al-jazīra al-'arabiyya'; idem, 'Alāqat al-khulafā'; Album, *Sylloge*, xiii (and the examples at plate 23).

²³ Shammā, 'Alāqat al-khulafā', 16–17; Album, *Sylloge*, xiv; al-Rāshid, *al-Rabadhah*, 64–5.

occupant far more opportunities for enrichment and maybe for further advancement than a comparable one in Mecca or Medina. In 156/772–3, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, still technically governor of Mecca and al-Ṭā'if, left the Hijāz for Baghdad, leaving his son there to look after things for him.²⁴ The evidence for relative regional administrative primacy between Mecca and Medina is, therefore, rather mixed, and can hardly be expected to give us any great insight into Medina's emergence and development as a holy city.

The people appointed as governors to the region do, however, give us some insight into the more important question of likely political marginalisation felt by Medina's inhabitants. This is not a hard and fast rule, but the majority of Umayyad governors of Medina were relatives of the Umayyad caliphs, and the majority of Abbasid governors of Medina were members of the Abbasid family or of other families related to the Abbasids by marriage.²⁵ Some exceptions are notable: for example, an *anṣārī*, Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm, served as governor of Medina briefly during the caliphate of al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 86–96/705–15), and then for a longer spell during the reigns of Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 96–97/715–17) and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99–101/717–20).²⁶ Half a century later in 150/767–8 – significantly after the revolt of the Hasanid Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh – Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75) replaced the Abbasid Ja'far b. Sulaymān as governor of Medina with the Hasanid al-Ḥasan b. Zayd.²⁷ Mūsā al-Hādī's governor of Medina, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abd Allāh, was a descendant of the second caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13–23/634–44), several members of whose family had two decades earlier supported Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh's revolt against the Abbasids.²⁸

²⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 378.

²⁵ For the Umayyads, there is now further discussion of this throughout McMillan, *Meaning of Mecca*; on Abbasid governors, see esp. Lassner, 'Provincial administration'.

²⁶ Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī, *Nasab Quraysh*, 286; Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 317, 323; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, II, 64–5; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 3, 241; idem, *Ansāb*, 4/1, 605; al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II, 353; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, II, 1255, 1281–2, 1305, 1372–5. For more on Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad, see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt (qism)*, 124–7.

²⁷ Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī, *Nasab Quraysh*, 280; Ibn Shabba, *Tārīkh*, I, 15; Ibn Abī Khaythama, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, II, 67; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 3, 269; idem, *Ansāb*, 5, 217, 549; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 358–9; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, II, 54–5. Khalīfa b. Khayyāt passes over al-Ḥasan b. Zayd's governorship entirely.

²⁸ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-'Azam, IX, 225; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 551–2, 568. On his family's support for Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh's revolt, see Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 201–2, 206; Elad, 'Rebellion', 181–2.

Exceptions such as these aside, the prosopography of governors does suggest that many Medinans would have had good reason to feel left out of local as well as interregional politics. The anonymous *Akbbār al-dawla al-abbāsiyya* also preserves an interesting report which suggests that Medinans were not known for their friendly attitudes towards the Umayyad or Abbasid caliphs. When the Abbasid *imām* Muḥammad b. 'Alī was extolling to some of his followers the merits of establishing the *dā'wa* in Khurāsān by highlighting the problems of other regions, he dismissed Mecca and Medina because their inhabitants 'were won over by Abū Bakr and 'Umar'.²⁹

It is very difficult, nonetheless, to see Medina's inhabitants as a group permanently united in their opposition to the Umayyad and then Abbasid caliphs. Even on the two most famous occasions of Medinan rebellion – the Battle of the Ḥarra in 63/683 and the rebellion of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh in 145/762 – it seems that not all Medinans supported the rebels. Amikam Elad has shown that although the Alid rebel Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh did find relatively widespread support among Medina's non-Alid families – including the Zubayrids, usually known to be prominent rivals of the Alids – some members of all the prominent families in Medina, including among the Alids, did not support him.³⁰ The better part of a century earlier, some of Medina's families had sided with Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya and the Syrians during the events leading up to the Battle of the Ḥarra.³¹ Shortly after the end of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh's revolt, the sources again note that important appointments were offered to some members of families who had provided supporters for that rebel. As well as the examples given earlier, it can be added here that the Zubayrid scholar al-Zubayr b. Bakkār's (d. 256/870) grandfather was appointed governor of al-Yamāma by Muḥammad al-Mahdī (r. 158–69/775–85), and of Medina and Yemen by Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 179–93/786–809), and his father was one of Hārūn's governors of Medina.³²

²⁹ *Akbbār al-dawla al-abbāsiyya*, 206. Another tradition attributed ultimately to 'Amr b. al-ʿĀs suggests that the inhabitants of Medina were the people most inclined to *fitna*, here 'rebellion', albeit not particularly good at it (*aṭlab al-nās li-fitna wa-a'jazuhum 'anhā*): al-Fasawī, *al-Ma'rifa wa-al-tā'rikh*, II, 411.

³⁰ Elad, 'Rebellion', 179–85; see also Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 200–2. One Alid who did not join the revolt was 'Ubayd Allāh b. al-Husayn b. 'Alī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the great-grandfather of the Medinan local historian Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī. He had earlier accepted a land grant near al-Madā'in from the first Abbasid caliph, Abū al-'Abbās al-Saffāh; see Bernheimer, *Alids*, 19.

³¹ Yazīd's envoy to the town was al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr al-Anṣārī; al-Ṭabarī, *Tā'rikh*, II, 404–5.

³² Khalīfa, *Tā'rikh*, 461; al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, *Jamharat nasab Quraysh*, I, 172, 177–8, 209; al-Ya'qūbī, *Tā'rikh*, II, 498; al-Ṭabarī, *Tā'rikh*, III, 521, 739; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī,

There is some evidence that Medina put up no resistance to the Alid rebels Abū al-Sarāyā sent to the town in 199/815, and Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967) briefly states that when Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Šādiq claimed allegiance in Medina in 200/815, the inhabitants of the town obliged him.³³ There is, however, no evidence of widespread support in the town for either this revolt, or for the earlier revolt of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan in 169/786. Accounts of this latter revolt are quite clear that al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī received virtually no support in Medina after his rebellion was declared in the Prophet's Mosque, which led to his and his followers' attempt to journey to Mecca to find support among the *hajj* pilgrims. During this journey, they were easily defeated by an Abbasid army at Fakhkh, three miles outside Mecca, on 8 Dhū al-Ḥijja 169/11 June 786.³⁴ Ahmed, in his recent study, has highlighted two reasons for decreasing support for Alid rebels in the region after 145/762. The first of these is that the Alids practically ceased intermarrying with the other Ḥijāzī families, but the other is that the Abbasid caliphs were particularly good at reconciling those previously disaffected elites from other families who had joined Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh's revolt, not in the least, as we have seen, by offering the occasional governorship to particularly important family branches.³⁵

Elsewhere, evidence reveals that at other times the Medinans even rallied to support caliphal authority in the town. When the Kharijite rebel Abū Ḥamza al-Mukhtār b. 'Awf advanced on Medina, the senior remaining Umayyad official in the town, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. 'Uthmān, led an army drawn together from locals out to confront them

Tārīkh Baghdād, x, 173, 176; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā*, viii, 454; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā*, iv, 84.

³³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 981; Abū al-Faraj, *Maqātil al-ṭālibiyyīn*, 537; cf. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, ii, 113.

³⁴ For al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī's revolt, see Khalīfa, *Tārīkh*, 445; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt (qism)*, 384–5; al-Fasawī, *al-Ma'rifa wa-al-tārīkh*, i, 159; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, 2, 540; al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhhbār al-tiwāl*, 386; al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 488; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 551–68; Abū al-Faraj, *Maqātil al-ṭālibiyyīn*, 442–60; al-Rāzī, *Akhhbār Fakhkh*, 132–62; Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 109–10, 205–7; Ahmed, *Religious Elite*, 162–3; Haider, *Origins of the Shī'a*, 207–10.

³⁵ Ahmed, *Religious Elite*, 165–7; see also Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 199, 206; and, more generally, on the Abbasids' greater recognition than the Umayyads of the importance of mobilising loyalty among provincial elites, see Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 170–1. For Alid marriage patterns, see also Bernheimer, *Alids*, 32–50. Haider has offered a third reason, that after the defeat of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh the Alid rebels in the Ḥijāz tended to have more distinctly Shī'ī programmes, which may have discouraged the other Ḥijāzī elite families from supporting them; see his *Origins of the Shī'a*, 209.

and they met at Qudayd in 130/747.³⁶ Abū Ḥamza's force is said to have convincingly beaten his opponents at this battle, and massacred many of them. What is significant is that it is the elite families of Medina, particularly from Quraysh and especially the Zubayrids, who are said to have fought against Abū Ḥamza at this battle and been killed because of it. It is precisely these same groups who at other times posed such a problem to caliphal control of the region. It is, of course, quite likely that the Medinans simply saw a Kharijite such as Abū Ḥamza as an even greater threat than the Marwanids, but the sources do not really allow us to judge why they fought against him. It is significant that they did not try to use his revolt to loosen the grip of Syrian caliphal rule in the region.

As was the case with Medina's economic situation, the available evidence for the town's political situation is poor. Further research may solve many of the problems highlighted here, but what can be gleaned from this brief overview is that some sections of Medina's population at certain times may have felt aggrieved and politically impotent. If they acted on this at times by joining revolts against caliphal rule – as they did most notably in 63/683 and 145/762 – they may well also have spread *ḥadīths* promoting Medina's sanctity. There are at least two reasons, however, not to make too much of this. The first is that Ahmed's prosopographical and genealogical analysis of five Ḥijāzī elite families within Quraysh has demonstrated that, as a general rule, they were important political players under the Sufyanids and early Abbasids (loosely until the reign of al-Ma'mūn), but lost much of their influence and power during the Marwanid period. Throughout this work, however, plenty of exceptions to this general rule are noted, and there are examples of Ḥijāzī elites who were close to Marwanid caliphs and of others who received no patronage from the Abbasids.³⁷ We should not generalise too broadly about the political situation of Medina and Medinans during the first three centuries AH.

The second reason is that we cannot, for certain, link many key individuals involved in spreading relevant *ḥadīths* to these aggrieved feelings. Arazi suggested that 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr played an important role in spreading *faḍā'il al-Madīna* traditions, but we also see him interacting politely with Umayyad rulers in spite of his earlier support for the

³⁶ Khalīfa, *Ta'rikh*, 391–5; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. al-'Azm, vii, 629–34; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, ii, 406; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, ii, 2006–15; al-Azdi, *Ta'rikh*, 108–10; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, i, 265–7.

³⁷ Ahmed, *Religious Elite*.

caliphate of his brother, 'Abd Allāh.³⁸ Likewise Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742), another scholar whom we saw was involved in the spread of *ḥadīths* about Medina's *ḥaram*, was by some accounts very close to the ruling Umayyad caliphs.³⁹ Regarding Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), a very important scholar in the promotion of Medina's sanctity, the evidence for his relationship with caliphs, especially Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr, is far too contradictory to allow any firm conclusions.⁴⁰ Within the vast corpus of traditions preserved from Ibn Zabāla's lost *Akhbār al-Madīna* by later sources there is very little trace of any strong antagonism towards most of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, and yet Ibn Zabāla must be considered one of the most forceful proponents of Medina's sanctity and image as a holy city. Another important transmitter of historical reports about Medina's sacred landscape, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Imrān (d. 197/812–13), was said to have been a close associate of Yaḥyā b. Khālid al-Barmakī.⁴¹

c) Some Conclusions

The foregoing discussion has been necessarily incomplete, as it is intended only to highlight some of the problems involved in seeking to contextualise Medina's widening appeal as a sacred space and holy city against a backdrop of economic recession and political resentment. The idea that we should see any town's rise as a holy city against its economic and political situation is not in theory a bad one. There can be no doubt that sacred spaces and holy cities throughout history have attracted capital and investment through pilgrimage and the patronage of political authorities. The vast sums of money the Āl Sa'ūd poured into Medina's development during the twentieth century and into the twenty-first make this particularly clear,⁴² but the phenomenon is clearly not merely a modern one. For antiquity, Herod's patronage of Jerusalem as a pilgrimage

³⁸ 'Urwa is commonly said to have corresponded with 'Abd al-Malik, or his son al-Walīd, on certain aspects of Muḥammad's biography; see now Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte*, 17, 39–43, 48, 79–97, 155–6, 224–7, 247–8. On the authenticity of this correspondence, cf. Shoemaker, 'In search'.

³⁹ Lecker, 'Biographical notes', 22–50.

⁴⁰ For example, Elad, 'Rebellion', 186–9.

⁴¹ Ahmed, *Religious Elite*, 59. As well as the reports from 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Imrān discussed in Chapter 4, it is also worth noting that some *ḥadīths* about Medina's *ḥaram* have his name in their *isnāds*; see, for example, *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 405–6; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, xix, 90; Ibn al-Najjār, *al-Durra al-thamīna*, 90–1; al-Maṭarī, *Tā'rif*, 149.

⁴² Behrens, *Garten des Paradieses*.

centre has been set thoroughly against the background of an endeavour to improve the city's economic fortunes by at least one modern study.⁴³

The potential economic and political benefits to residents of a holy city are clear. For the development of Medina's *ḥaram* and the gradual realisation of its sacred landscape as a holy city, however, there are good reasons to be sceptical that the phenomenon can be closely linked to ideas of economic and political decline. In addition to those already outlined, there is one further good reason for caution: there is no clear line, at least not by the late second/eighth and early third/ninth centuries, between Medinans and non-Medinans when it comes to the promotion of the town's sanctity, its holy sites and pilgrimage to them. Many Medinans certainly did involve themselves fully in these processes, but so too did residents of other regions. Medinan scholars may conceivably have promoted their town's *ṣaḍā'il*, *ḥaram* and other holy sites, as well as any attendant pilgrimage rituals, out of resentment fostered by their economic and political lot in life, or in an attempt to improve that lot (though this remains to be demonstrated), or simply out of local pride, but that cannot explain why inhabitants of other regions took up the task so enthusiastically.

That Medinans promoted their town's holiness is in any case not particularly noteworthy; the inhabitants of many towns across the Islamic world produced local *ṣaḍā'il* traditions, built shrines and provided them with sacred narratives with similar ends in mind.⁴⁴ What is more noteworthy is that Medina became one of only a handful of towns whose *ḥaram*, other sacred sites and its *ṣaḍā'il* more generally were accepted, and also visited, by great numbers of Muslims across the Islamic world. If we think specifically about the legal debates concerning Medina's *ḥaram* analysed in Chapter 3, we should realise that most followers of Mālik b. Anas, al-Shāfi'i, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and their pro-Medinan predecessors beyond the Ḥijāz cannot have had more of a stake in Medinan elites' political or economic circumstances than most of the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa or the other known jurists who opposed them; nor can most of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs in Syria and Iraq. Yet many caliphs and scholars of the Mālikī, Shāfi'i and Ḥanbalī *madhhabs* among others before and after them invested heavily – both financially and intellectually – in Medina's *ḥaram* and other sacred sites, as well as in promoting practices of pilgrimage there and its interregional veneration as one of

⁴³ Goodman, 'Pilgrimage economy'.

⁴⁴ For a recent study of such activity for a town in Khurāsān, see Azad, *Sacred Landscape*.

Islam's holiest cities. We need to look beyond the town's economic and political circumstances to understand more fully why.

MUḤAMMAD AND HIS LEGACY

Medina's increasingly widespread recognition as a sacred space (especially as a *ḥaram*) and development as a holy city over the first-third/seventh-ninth centuries can only be explained in the context of broad, caliphate-wide phenomena. It is possible that various local factors in different regions played a role, but it would be unwise to emphasise this too heavily. To take the example of the *ḥaram* debates in particular, there are certainly discrepancies in which *ḥadīths* appear in which early compilations, but most seem to suggest participation in the same wider trends and debates. In any case, by the third/ninth century different traditions and arguments can rarely still be linked to scholars of particular regions. There is some evidence for a degree of earlier regionalisation in the precise contents of relevant *ḥadīths*, but not particularly for the general theme of the promotion of Medina's sanctity.⁴⁵

One such broad, caliphate-wide phenomenon stands out as particularly promising for an attempt to explain why successive caliphs and scholars from the end of the first/early eighth century onwards undertook to promote the sanctity of Medina and various sites within the area in a number of different ways: the ever-increasing importance of the Prophet as the ultimate source of legitimate political, religious and legal authority from the late first/seventh century and especially through the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. The well known explanation for the name 'Medina' that came to replace 'Yathrib' for the town – that it is an abbreviation of *madīnat al-nabī*, 'the Prophet's town' – may perhaps make this connection all the more obvious, but it is still one that requires a detailed investigation.

a) Muḥammad as a Source of Authority for the Caliphs

i) *The Umayyads*

Several studies have demonstrated that only in the late first/seventh century did clear signs begin to emerge of the importance attached to the

⁴⁵ Among many studies which demonstrate the regionalism of early *ḥadīth* knowledge in general, a classic remains Juyneboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 39–66; more recently Sadeghi, 'Traveling tradition test'.

legacy of Muḥammad in material promulgated by the nascent caliphal state.⁴⁶ Muḥammad's first appearance in the documentary record to date appears to come in 66/685–6, with the first occurrence on a coin minted in Bīshāpūr in Fārs by its Zubayrid governor of the so-called short *shahāda*: 'In the name of God, Muḥammad is the Messenger of God' (*bismillāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*). Authorities in charge of other mints quickly took up and embellished this precedent.⁴⁷ From 71/691, he begins to appear much more frequently in ever more detailed formulae in other media. On the tombstone of 'Abbāsa bt. Jurayj from Aswān in Upper Egypt, probably datable to this year, the Muslims' (*ahl al-islām*) loss of the Prophet Muḥammad is said to be their greatest misfortune (*muṣība*).⁴⁸ On the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, dated to 72/691–2, it is famously proclaimed that:

Muḥammad is the servant of God and His Messenger. God and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, pray for him and salute him! May God bless him, and may peace and the mercy of God be upon him.⁴⁹

The new aniconic *dinārs* and *dirhams* issued by 'Abd al-Malik from 77/696 proclaim: 'Muḥammad is the Messenger of God whom He sent with guidance and the religion of truth that He might make it prevail over all religion.'⁵⁰ From this time onwards, references to Muḥammad continue to appear in the documentary material.

The contrast with the period before 66/685–6, from which despite more than a century of research there is still no known mention of Muḥammad in the documentary record, is striking, although we must bear in mind how little evidence actually survives from the period before this turning point.⁵¹ The lack of documentary evidence for the significance of Muḥammad's legacy before 66/685–6 does not, of course, mean

⁴⁶ For example, Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, esp. 24–33; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, esp. 549–56; idem, 'New documentary texts'; Johns, 'Archaeology', 414–16, 426–33; Robinson, *Abd al-Malik*, 75–121; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, esp. 205–6.

⁴⁷ Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 550–4; Heidemann, 'Evolving representation', esp. 167–9.

⁴⁸ El-Hawary, 'Second oldest'; see also now Bacharach and Anwar, 'Early versions of the *shahāda*'. Hoyland has suggested that the date of this inscription should be 171/788 instead; see his 'Content and context', 87, n. 65.

⁴⁹ Kessler, 'Abd al-Malik's inscription', 4.

⁵⁰ Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 700.

⁵¹ For an introduction to what little material there is, see Hoyland, 'New documentary texts'. The sudden introduction of a number of new features in the material and documentary record at the time of the second *fitna* and the caliphate of 'Abd al-Malik has led one historian recently to speak of the foundation of the Islamic state as 'a story of deferred revolution, rather than gradual evolution': Robinson, 'Rise of Islam', 209.

that he was not important before that time. To confirm this, we do not even need to rely on Arabic literary sources of the late second/eighth century and later, although they too have much to offer in this regard. The Qur'ān (33.57) promises eternal curses and punishment for those who seek to harm God or His Messenger; the Messenger of God was also heralded in the Qur'ān (33.21) as a 'perfect model for imitation' (*uswa ḥasana*). A late seventh-century CE Christian author writing in the Jazīra in Syriac, John bar Penkāyē, stated clearly that the Muslims 'kept to the tradition (*mašlmānūtā*) of Muḥammad, who was their instructor (*tār'ā*), to such an extent that they inflicted the death penalty on anyone who was seen to act brazenly against his laws (*nāmōsē*).⁵² The scale and scope of the evidence, however, changes drastically after the end of Sufyanid rule.

Presumably, as several historians have suggested, the caliphate of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr was crucial.⁵³ Ibn al-Zubayr's governor of Bīshāpūr is the first known authority to have placed Muḥammad's name on an official object (in this case, a *dirham*), and it is quite possible that Ibn al-Zubayr sought to legitimise his claims to the caliphate through emphasising his connection – genealogical and territorial – to the Prophet. In any event, after their victory the Marwanids fully incorporated Muḥammad's legacy into the ideological framework of the state as a 'propaganda weapon':⁵⁴ the new aniconic coins, the inscription inside the Dome of the Rock and other official inscriptions from this time onwards (for example, those on milestones) make this clear.⁵⁵ Some extant copies of letters said to have been circulated on behalf of the later Marwanid caliphs emphasised that the Umayyad caliphs were the heirs of the Prophet/prophets and the protectors of his community.⁵⁶ A smaller number still of these letters stressed that the Umayyad caliphs were the upholders and followers of the Prophet's exemplary custom (*sunna*).⁵⁷ In part, this new focus on

⁵² The translation is from Brock, 'North Mesopotamia', 61; Syriac text in John bar Penkāyē, *Ktābā d-rish mellē*, 146–7. For other, similar pre-66/685–6 examples, see Q9.33; *Armenian History*, 1, 95–6.

⁵³ For example, Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 552–3.

⁵⁴ The term is borrowed from Hoyland, 'New documentary texts', 397.

⁵⁵ For other official inscriptions, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 700–3.

⁵⁶ Perhaps the best known example is al-Walīd b. Yazīd's succession announcement: Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 116–26. In this regard, however, there are also the fascinating letters of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā written on behalf of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik and Marwān b. Muḥammad, on which see al-Qāḍī, 'Religious foundation', esp. 244–8, 265–8. See also many of the *bay'a* documents discussed in Marsham, *Rituals*, and the further discussion of Marwanid letters and poetry in Rubin, 'Prophets and caliphs'.

⁵⁷ See especially two letters penned by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd concerning a caliphal *ḥajj* and the prohibition of chess in 'Abbās, *'Abd al-Ḥamīd*, 205–6, 265–8 (nos. 11 and 22);

Muḥammad was linked to the emerging urgency with which Marwanid caliphs sought to underline the distinctions between their religion, Islam, and that of the other monotheists of the Near East: Muḥammad's status as a Prophet was one of the most obvious areas of disagreement.⁵⁸ It was also a response to the political challenge laid down by Ibn al-Zubayr and his supporters.

It is particularly notable, therefore, that we saw in Chapter 4 that it is only with the caliph al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, in the very late first/early eighth century, that we have clear evidence of a reigning caliph taking great steps to appear as an active and beneficent patron of Medina's development as a holy city. In addition to all the evidence presented and discussed in that chapter (alongside that in Chapter 5), it is worth here emphasising the clear connection between this Marwanid interest in patronising the sanctification of sites in Medina and their desire to link themselves to the legacy of Muḥammad's exercise of religious, legal and political leadership there. Al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik and his governor of Medina, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, were particularly interested in associating themselves with the development of the central mosque in Medina where Muḥammad was widely thought both to have been buried and to have conducted some of the main religious and political functions of his leadership of the nascent community; it was principally their work that was responsible for turning Medina's mosque into the 'Prophet's Mosque'. They also directed their attention towards memorialising a number of sites at which the Prophet purportedly prayed.

Al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik also appears to have been the first caliph to distribute money and gifts to the Medinans on his visit to the town while undertaking the *hajj* in 91/709–10.⁵⁹ The earliest known coin associated in any way with the Ḥijāz is a *dīnār* of 91/709–10, which carries the mint name *ma'dīn amīr al-mu'minīn*, 'the Commander of the Faithful's mine', and Samīr Shammā has plausibly (although by no means conclusively) suggested that this was from a group struck to commemorate al-Walīd's visit of that year to Medina.⁶⁰ The fact that this heightening of

and further discussion in al-Qāḍī, 'Religious foundation', 263–5, and Munt, 'Official announcement'.

⁵⁸ See esp. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 194–224; also Décobert, 'L'autorité religieuse', 25; Robinson, *Abd al-Malik*, 105–21, and Hawting, 'Religion of Abraham'. On the impact that this Marwanid endeavour may have had on al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik's building programme across the caliphate, see Flood, *Great Mosque*, 213–36.

⁵⁹ Al-Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1233.

⁶⁰ Shammā, 'Nuqud al-jazīra al-'arabiyya', 15–19.

ostentatiously pious caliphal activity in Medina coincides with the more public proclamation just a decade or two earlier of the Prophet as a key source of legitimate authority should not be ignored. In a political environment in which public links to Muḥammad were gaining greater value, patronage of Medina as Muḥammad's *ḥaram* with his shrine could have had valuable ideological benefits.

After al-Walīd, however, Umayyad interest in Medina appears to have waned. We saw in Chapter 4 that Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik and Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik are also said to have visited the town in 97/716 and 106/725 respectively while on their way to perform the *hajj* rites in Mecca, but they do not appear to have tried quite so flamboyantly to emphasise their beneficence towards sites there connected with the Prophet. Sulaymān did distribute gifts to the population, although the evidence of at least one source suggests that this was not seen as a positive action by all.⁶¹ He is also said to have executed four hundred prisoners of war in the town and to have had one of the mosque's minarets pulled down because it overlooked the Dār Marwān in which he was staying.⁶² The evidence for Hishām is likewise ambiguous. When he visited Medina he not only brought gifts, but gave orders that four thousand Medinan men be levied for service elsewhere in the caliphate.⁶³ There could be several reasons for this apparent decline in pious attention paid to Medina by later Marwanid caliphs. It could be that the sources simply neglected to mention all the more virtuous activities that caliphs such as Sulaymān and Hishām undertook in Medina. Or it could be that caliphs after al-Walīd came to realise, as Crone and Hinds did, that paradoxically, in spite of their attempts to claim Prophetic authority for their rule, 'the growing prominence of Muḥammad was bad for Umayyad dynastic legitimacy.'⁶⁴ Or there could be other reasons.

ii) The Abbasids

The Abbasids perhaps had better motives than the Umayyads for affirming their close connection with the Prophet. They had come to power as part of a movement aimed at installing the 'chosen one' (*al-riḍā*) from the Prophet's family (*ahl'lāl al-bayt*) as caliph, and yet it was not at all clear to

⁶¹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 358; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz*, 135.

⁶² On the prisoners, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1338–40; on the minaret, see Chapter 4, note 61.

⁶³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1472.

⁶⁴ Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 32.

all the supporters of that movement that the Abbasid family itself should supply that person.⁶⁵ The descendants of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib also claimed the right to provide the 'chosen one', and shortly after the Abbasid seizure of power, in 145/762, two Alids, Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, the sons of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī, contested the rule of the second Abbasid caliph, Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr. This revolt, which broke out in Medina and Basra, posed a serious ideological threat to the Abbasids, because it somewhat undermined their claims to represent the entire family of the Prophet.⁶⁶ If the Umayyads had been undone by their failure to develop adequately a language of legitimacy that uniquely connected them to the legacy of the Prophet's personal authority, the Abbasids were in danger of similarly losing out to the Alids.

After defeating this early Alid revolt, the Abbasids turned to other means of shoring up their legitimacy. On the one hand, they claimed that the Abbasid family had been granted the leadership of the family of the Prophet by Abū Hāshim, 'Alī's grandson through his son Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya; on the other, they tried to cut out the Alids altogether by claiming that the caliphate was theirs by inheritance (*wirātha*) through the Prophet's uncle al-'Abbās.⁶⁷ The letters apparently exchanged between Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr and the rebel Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, preserved in al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* from 'Umar b. Shabba and Abū Ghassān, fully display the argument between the Abbasids and Alids over who had the legitimate inheritance from the Prophet via the respective uncles, al-'Abbās and Abū Ṭālib.⁶⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, 'Umar b. Shabba, Abū Ghassān and Ibn Zabāla among them also preserved the text of an eight-verse poem said to have been recited to Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr when Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh had publicly declared his revolt. The last two verses proclaim:

It was not the people who gave it [i.e. the caliphate] to you; rather the Sublime King gave you that.

The legacy (*turāth*) of Muḥammad is yours, and you are the roots of true authority (*al-ḥaqq*) when the roots are expunged.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Crone, 'On the meaning'; idem, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 87–98.

⁶⁶ Further discussion in Lassner, 'Provincial administration'; Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 200–4; Elad, 'Rebellion'.

⁶⁷ Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 91–2.

⁶⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 208–15; for further discussion, see Bernheimer, *Alids*, 37–8.

⁶⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 203. See also the counter-claim said to have been offered in a sermon by Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh as reported by Ibn Zabāla in al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 229: 'The people most worthy of upholding this faith are the sons of the first *muhājirūn* and the supporting *anṣār*.'

In light of the Abbasids' efforts to advertise as widely as possible their close connection to the Prophet, it is not such a surprise that they sought to become known as patrons of his town and shrine.

The work several early Abbasid caliphs undertook to further Medina's development as a holy city filled with sites connected to the Prophet's career there has already been documented in Chapter 4. Here we might add a few further details which give clear insight into precisely why they were so keen to be associated visibly with the patronage of Prophetic sites in Medina. The *Kitāb al-Manāsik* (written in the early fourth/tenth century), offering as its source the Alid local historian Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī, provides the text of two inscriptions al-Manṣūr set up in the Prophet's Mosque, and they make quite interesting reading. The first states:

In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful. God, there is no god but He – the whole verse (*āya*)⁷⁰ – and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, whom He sent with guidance and the true faith. The servant of God 'Abd Allāh the Commander of the Believers – may God ennoble him – ordered the construction work on the Mosque of the Messenger of God (ṣ), the building of this courtyard (*raḥba*), and the expansion of the Mosque of the Messenger of God for those Muslims who attend it, in the year 151 [= 768–9 CE], desiring [to do so] for the sake of God and the Last Abode. The Commander of the Faithful – may God ennoble him – is the most worthy of men to oversee that because of his close relationship to the Messenger of God (ṣ) and because of his caliphate with which he is distinguished. May God strengthen the wage of the Commander of the Faithful and make better his reward.⁷¹

The second says:

There is no god but God alone; he has no associate. Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, whom He sent with guidance and the true faith – the whole verse. O God, forgive your prophets and the caliphs of the believers (*khulafā al-mu'minin*), alive and dead. O God, pray for Muḥammad, Your servant and Your Prophet, You, your angels and all the believers. The servant of God, 'Abd Allāh the Commander of the Believers, ordered the construction work on the Mosque of the Messenger of God, the restoration of what had been brought into disrepair (*iṣlāḥ mā ufsida minhu*), and its reconstruction in the year 152 [= 769–70 CE].⁷²

The explicit appeal in the first of these inscriptions to the Abbasid caliph's close personal association with Muḥammad suggests that al-Manṣūr had

⁷⁰ This is presumably an abbreviation in the transcription only and not one found in the original text of the inscription. (The same applies to the similar occurrence in the following text.)

⁷¹ *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, 394.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 395.

begun to realise in the wake of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh's revolt six years earlier that supporting work on the Prophet's shrine in Medina could be a way to win greater legitimacy for the Abbasid family – and maybe even more specifically his own descendants – over rivals within the wider family of the Prophet. The apparent desire of al-Manṣūr's successor, Muḥammad al-Mahdī (r. 158–69/775–85), to have the appearance of the Prophet's *minbar* in the mosque returned to its original state – before Mu'āwiya or another Umayyad caliph had added six steps to it – also indicates a clear attempt by an early Abbasid caliph to demonstrate that he sought to exercise his religious and political authority in the same way that Muḥammad had for the earliest Muslim community.

Perhaps the Abbasid caliph most famously associated with the Ḥijāz is Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–93/786–809). He is not only said to have led the *hajj* personally on no fewer than nine occasions;⁷³ much of the most significant work ever undertaken on the pilgrim route from Baghdad and Kufa to Mecca is associated with his caliphate.⁷⁴ Some small projects he and his governors ordered in Medina were mentioned in Chapter 4, and it should now be added that during many of his pilgrimages to Mecca, Hārūn visited Medina as well and distributed lavish gifts there.⁷⁵ The sources include several very interesting reports about his visits to Medina, and two in particular are worth discussing. The first is preserved by Muḥammad b. Khalaf Wakī (d. 306/918):

When al-Rashīd came to Medina, he attached great importance to ascending the Prophet's (s) *minbar* in a black cloak (*qabā aswad*) and belt. Abū al-Bakhtarī⁷⁶ had said to him, 'Ja'far b. Muḥammad told me on the authority of his father that Gabriel descended upon the Prophet – upon whom be peace – while he had on a cloak (*qabā*) and belt carrying within a dagger (*muḥtājiz* *fiḥā bi-khanjar*).'⁷⁷

Wakī goes on to report how Abū al-Bakhtarī's statement incited a ferociously invective poem about what a great liar he was,⁷⁸ but it is more significant for us that Hārūn al-Rashīd appears to have been concerned

⁷³ Hārūn led the *hajj* in 170/787, 173/790, 174/791, 175/792, 177/794, 179/796, 181/798, 186/802 and 188/804: al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 521–2; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 605, 609–10, 612, 629, 638–9, 646, 651–2, 654, 701; slightly variant dates in al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, V, 293–5.

⁷⁴ Al-Rashīd, *Darb Zubaydah*.

⁷⁵ For example, al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 492; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 605.

⁷⁶ For Abū al-Bakhtarī's tenure as governor of Medina, see Chapter 4, note 103.

⁷⁷ Wakī, *Akhhār*, I, 247–8.

⁷⁸ Abū al-Bakhtarī was infamous among some *ḥadīth* critics as having been labelled by Abū Dāwūd as one of the two 'great liars' (*kadhḥābān*) of Medina, along with Ibn Zabāla: al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, XXV, 66.

with acting exactly as the Prophet had while he was in Medina. In the second report, the famous historian and Prophetic biographer Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822) explains how as a younger man he was called on to give Hārūn a guided tour of the sights in Medina:

The Commander of the Faithful Hārūn al-Rashid came to Medina whilst undertaking the *hajj* and said to Yaḥyā b. Khālid [al-Barmakī], 'I want someone to come to me who knows all about Medina and its sights (*al-mashāhid*), how Gabriel – upon whom be peace – came down to the Prophet (ṣ) and from which direction he came to him, and the tombs of the martyrs.' Yaḥyā b. Khālid asked around and everyone pointed him in my direction. He summoned me and I came to him after the afternoon prayer. He said to me, 'O *shaykh*, the Commander of the Faithful – may God strengthen him – wishes for you to pray the last evening prayer in the mosque, and that you accompany us around these sites to inform us about them and the place where Gabriel – upon whom be peace – came. Keep close!' When I had prayed the last evening prayer, I came across lanterns that had been brought out and two men on donkeys. Yaḥyā said, 'Where is the man?' 'Here!' I replied. I took him to the residential courts by the mosque (*dūr al-masjid*) and said, 'This is the place to which Gabriel came.' They dismounted from their donkeys, prayed two *rak'as*, and supplicated to God for an hour. Then they remounted while I was before them. There was not a single place or sight that I did not take them to, and [at each of which] they began to pray and exert considerable effort in supplication. We continued in this until we came back to the mosque when dawn had broken and the muezzin had begun the call to prayer ...⁷⁹

This is a significant account for many reasons and one of those is that Hārūn specifically wanted to see the site(s) to which Gabriel had descended, presumably to bring part of the Quranic revelation to Muḥammad, and the tombs of the martyrs, almost certainly of the Battle of Uhud. In light of this prominent connection between Hārūn and the sites associated with the Prophet, it is worth noting that the house in Mecca in which Muḥammad was believed to have been born was first established as a mosque (*masjid*) either by his mother, al-Khayzurān, or his wife, Zubayda.⁸⁰

Although Hārūn does not appear to have patronised much significant work connected with sites specifically in Medina, his frequent visits to Mecca and Medina doubtless had some role to play in the wider promulgation of the idea that Medina possessed a sanctity and a *haram* equal to Mecca's. The idea that the two towns possess a similar degree of sanctity is perhaps expressed best in Arabic by the common usage of the term

⁷⁹ Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, v, 425–6.

⁸⁰ Al-Azraqī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 198–9; al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makka*, iv, 5.

al-ḥaramayn, 'the two *ḥarams*', to indicate Mecca and Medina. The earliest unambiguous usage of this term may well date to the caliphate of Hārūn. It certainly appears in many works of the third/ninth century and beyond, but whether it was often in use any earlier is difficult to tell. It does appear in an epistle attributed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728),⁸¹ although no one seems to have argued in detail to date that this particular epistle is a case of pseudepigraphy, as so many of the other works attributed to al-Ḥasan are, this one may well be too.⁸² A poem in Abū 'Ubayda's (d. 209/824) *Naqā'id Jarīr wa-al-Farazdaq*, a compilation of verses said to date to the late first/seventh and early second/eighth centuries, does use the phrase 'the two sacred mosques of God' (*masjidā Allāh al-ḥarāmān*), but this is not quite the same as the later usage of the term *ḥaramayn* alone as a technical term to refer to Mecca and Medina.⁸³

On slightly firmer ground, however, there is a poem in praise of Hārūn recorded in al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh* and attributed to one Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Kilābī, in which the term is employed. Hārūn was famous for his regular leadership of both the *ḥajj* and the annual summer campaign against the Byzantines (Ar. *ṣā'ifa*, pl. *ṣawā'if*), and Abū al-Ma'ālī's poem plays on this:

Whoever seeks to meet you [must look] in the *ḥaramayn* or
the farthest frontiers;
In the land of the enemy, on a swift horse and in the land of
ease, on a camel saddle.
None but you has ever held the frontiers of those who have
been deputised to rule.⁸⁴

This panegyric may provide one of the earliest clear uses of the term *ḥaramayn* as a quasi-technical term to denote the holy cities of the Ḥijāz, during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, a caliph who tried very hard to demonstrate his legitimacy by associating himself with the Ḥijāz and with the political authority of the Prophet.

⁸¹ Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (attrib.), *Faḍā'il Makka*, 35.

⁸² Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 117–23; Mourad, *Early Islam*.

⁸³ Abū 'Ubayda, *Naqā'id*, I, 529.

⁸⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 710. The translation is slightly adapted from Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, 103. The dichotomy of the frontiers and the *ḥaramayn* is also nicely expressed in a tradition in praise of the town of Wāsiṭ in Iraq, in which the Kufan emigrant to Mecca Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. ca. 198/813–14) reportedly declared, 'Were I to reside somewhere other than the frontiers (*thughūr*) or the *ḥaramayn*, I would not reside anywhere except Wāsiṭ'; see Baḥshal, *Ta'rikh*, 40.

It may well have been the zeitgeist of Hārūn's caliphate, the culmination of more than a century of developing caliphal attitudes towards the ideological significance of Medina as a *ḥaram* and a holy city alongside Mecca, that led to widespread feelings of the sort that famously brought al-Ya'qūbī (d. ca. 292/904–5) to declare during his account of the second *fitna* that Ibn al-Zubayr must be considered a true caliph:

People have said that the caliphate truly belongs to whosoever possesses the *ḥaramayn* and to whosoever leads the *ḥajj*. For that reason, we included the history of Marwān [b. al-Ḥakam] and part of the reign of 'Abd al-Malik within the history of Ibn al-Zubayr.⁸⁵

In sum, the available evidence suggests how the caliphs, over time, came to see Medina's development as a sacred space and holy city – one which they controlled and of which they acted as patrons – as important after the clear consolidation from the late first/seventh century of Muḥammad as the most important source of legitimate political and religious authority. Neither the Umayyads nor the Abbasids had as direct a genealogical link to the Prophet as the Alids – although some Abbasids certainly tried to suggest that they did – but acting as patrons of Medina was one way they could draw on the legacy of his authority for themselves.⁸⁶ The importance to caliphs of ensuring that they were seen as the principal patrons of sacred spaces such as those in Medina was underlined by the sermon which the Alid rebel al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī reportedly delivered in the Prophet's Mosque upon declaring his revolt in 169/786. In this, he called the people there to offer him allegiance on the basis that: 'I am the son of the Messenger of God, in the *ḥaram* of the Messenger of God, in the mosque of the Messenger of God, atop the *minbar* of the Prophet of God.'⁸⁷ If the Umayyad and Abbasid families could not beat the Alids for genealogy, neither could they afford to cede to them the legitimacy derived from the control of sacred spaces in Medina.

⁸⁵ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 321; discussed in Robinson, *Abd al-Malik*, 34.

⁸⁶ In this sense, the history of caliphal attitudes towards Medina and its monuments erected to commemorate the Prophet's memory mirrors rather well the gradual process over the second-third/eighth-ninth centuries by which many of the traditional insignia of the caliphal office – the seal ring (*khātām*), staff (*ʿasā*) or sceptre (*qaḍīb*) and cloak (*burda*) – came to be understood as relics from Muḥammad's lifetime. It was, for example, the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil who in 244/858–9 had the Prophet's spear (*ʿanaza*) introduced into caliphal ceremonial; on this, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1437, and on the caliphal insignia in general, see Rubin, 'Prophets and caliphs', 95–8; Marsham, *Rituals*, 109, 141, 204–5, 259, 316.

⁸⁷ See Chapter 5, notes 83–4.

At first there was an attempt by al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz to encourage Medina's status as a *ḥaram* and holy city, containing a landscape of sacred sites, because it was the Prophet's town and shrine. Later caliphs were also interested in the town because it was there that the earliest Islamic polity had taken shape, where Muḥammad had led a career as both a prophet and a statesman.⁸⁸ The frequently noted connection between politics and the development of sacred spaces can be seen starkly in Medina's case. Medina's emergence as a holy city was probably not connected to any 'political decline' that it may have experienced, but it was nonetheless intimately linked to politics. The legitimacy that caliphs could derive for themselves, their descendants and their regimes by drawing explicit links between themselves and the Ḥijāz and its Prophetic history can go a long way to explaining why they encouraged Medina's status as a holy city and the Prophet's *ḥaram*. In turn, as the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs patronised Medina and various sites there to benefit by linking themselves to the town's sanctity, they further reinforced that sanctity throughout the lands they ruled.

b) *Hadīths* and Muḥammad's Role as a Source of Authority for Jurists

It was not just caliphs, governors and their officials who saw what was at stake in claiming the inheritance of Muḥammad's legacy, and thus the question of Medina's sanctity. Many aspects of the religious and legal authority the caliphs claimed were ever more widely asserted by the emerging albeit loose class of religious scholars, the '*ulamā*'.⁸⁹ As can be seen throughout the chapters of this book, Muslim scholars – historians, jurists and others (the various categories are not, of course, mutually exclusive) – discussed aspects of Medina's sanctity and the narratives which secured its holiness frequently, at times in considerable detail. Perhaps more interesting, they also debated many of those aspects. For

⁸⁸ Although this is beyond the scope of this book, it is worth noting that the Umayyad *amīrs* and caliphs of al-Andalus also made clear attempts to link their own authority to the sacred history of Medina and Muḥammad's first polity there; see esp. Fierro, 'Mobile *minbar*'; idem, 'Abd al-Rahman, 127–8, 134–5.

⁸⁹ The classic work is Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, but on the general intensity, especially during the third/ninth century, of the competition among rulers and scholars for the Prophet's legacy, see also Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, passim, but, for example, see xii; Décobert, 'L'autorité religieuse'; and cf. in part Zaman, *Religion and Politics*.

a great many Muslims, Medina's sanctity as a whole was defined most clearly and emphatically by its status as a *ḥaram* alongside Mecca, and yet for others that status was seriously in doubt. In Chapter 3 I traced an outline of the development of this particular legal debate; here, it is time to examine more closely why some Muslim scholars promoted Medina's *ḥaram* while others undermined it. We have seen why caliphs were interested in the promotion of Medina as a sacred space and, ultimately, a holy city; now we can use the *ḥaram* debates as a case study to learn why many scholars invested their efforts in this process too.

It is perhaps easiest to begin this task by ruling out some potential reasons why those who argued against the existence of Medina's *ḥaram* did so. We saw earlier that the most prevalent opposition to Medina's *ḥaram* came from some associated with the school of law forming around the circle of the Iraqi jurist Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767). It is theoretically possible that they came to argue against the validity of Medina's *ḥaram* because the various *ḥadīths* which confirmed its existence were not circulating in Iraq at the time of his and his earliest students' careers. If any faith at all, however, can be placed in the evidence of the *isnāds* of these *ḥadīths* regarding the geography of their circulation – and research over the past few decades would suggest that a certain amount of such faith would be permissible here⁹⁰ – then plenty of these traditions were current in Iraq (both in Kufa and Basra) at least by this time.

Because much of the opposition to Medina's *ḥaram* seems to have come from jurists based in Iraq, however, it is instead worth examining whether some kind of *mufaḍḍala*, a competition over the merits of various regions – principally Iraq and the Ḥijāz – and the subsequent worthiness of their scholars, played a role in these debates. Were some Iraqis willing to accept one Ḥijāzī holy city, Mecca, but not willing to grant the region more importance than was absolutely necessary? That one of the great rivalries of early Islamic legal history was between some of the jurists of Kufa (the proto-Ḥanafis) and some of those from Medina (the proto-Mālikīs) has long been clear.⁹¹ Over time this resulted in a large corpus of occasionally quite brutal polemic between jurists who considered the geographical origins of their jurisprudence to be in Medina and Kufa. In an interesting report preserved by Wakī, a group of Medinans in the early-to-mid third/ninth century were discussing the well-known

⁹⁰ See, for example, Sadeghi, 'Traveling tradition test'.

⁹¹ If it were not clear enough from works like al-Shaybānī's *Kitāb al-Ḥujja 'alā ahl al-Madīna*, see, for example, Schacht, *Origins*.

Prophetic *ḥadīth* which stipulated that plague (*tāūn*) and the 'Antichrist' (*dajjāl*) could never enter Medina; one of the participants in this discussion, Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd b. Maymūn, wryly added, 'And neither will the personal reasoning (*ra'y*) of Abū Ḥanīfa.'⁹²

Such blunt polemics as they have come down to us tend to date from the third/ninth century and later, when the Medinan-Kufan rivalry had developed into something much larger. They developed, however, in part at least out of an earlier, regional competition. One group of Medinan jurists, later claimed as the forefathers and early adherents of the Mālikī *madhhab*, appear as promoters of the idea that the practice (*'amal*) of their hometown's inhabitants was much more important as a source for positive law than the practice of the peoples of other towns and regions.⁹³ A good example of such a claim can be found in the *Mukhtaṣar* of Abū Muṣ'ab al-Zuhri (d. 242/856):

God chose [the people of Medina] for His Prophet to make them his helpers and He said to him: 'Take counsel with them in the affair.' [Q3.159] And he gave them, and no other, through [the Prophet] a distinction and a knowledge which He has not given to others. In their homes was the revelation and from them arises the interpretation, and from them come the Imāms who should be emulated. And they are God's proof of His creation up to the day of judgement. The truth [of God] has no record [of application] except among them and for them. Medina is the place [to which the Prophet and his companions] emigrated and the highpoint of their community. Their influences were upon it and their rulings were made in it.⁹⁴

This passage is particularly crucial because it demonstrates clearly that Medinans could easily resort to using the sacred history of Muḥammad's career in their hometown and reports about their town's subsequently developing sanctity to demonstrate their claims to superior judicial authority.⁹⁵ When we see other scholars debating the sanctity of Medina,

⁹² Wakī, *Akhhbār*, I, 259–60; on Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd b. Maymūn, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxvi, 72–3.

⁹³ For a specific example of a late Umayyad Medinan *qāḍī* (Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm [d. 132/749–50]) preferring to issue rulings on the basis of Medinan *'amal* rather than *ḥadīths*, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 2505–6.

⁹⁴ Translation from Brockopp, 'Competing theories', 17–18. On Medinan *'amal* and its role in Medinan scholars' jurisprudence, see Dutton, *Origins of Islamic Law*, although cf. in part the review by Christopher Melchert.

⁹⁵ Similar claims can be found in the letter to the Egyptian jurist al-Layth b. Sa'd (d. 175/791) attributed to Mālik b. Anas, the earliest extant version of which is preserved in al-Fasawī, *al-Ma'rifa wa-al-ta'rikh*, I, 695–7; and more extensively among later Mālikī scholars, including, for example, Ibn Abī Zayd, *Jāmi'*, esp. 138–45; al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik*, I, 32–44. Mathieu Tillier has recently suggested that the earliest Abbasid

therefore, we need to consider fully the ramifications such disputes carried for their participants' claims to legitimate religious and legal authority. It is obvious enough in this light that scholars of other regions might want to counter claims for the superiority of Medinan '*amal*', and clear that they did so, in order to preserve their own juridical authority.⁹⁶ Early opposition to Medina's *ḥaram* may have developed among Iraqi jurists in opposition to Medinan jurists' claims that the peculiar sanctity of their hometown was evidence that their legal authority was paramount among their contemporaries.

Many Iraqi scholars of the late second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, however, did hold a pro-Medinan position, and many scholars of the later Shāfi'i and Ḥanbalī *madhhabs* firmly held that Medina possessed a *ḥaram*. It may still be possible to detect in these later debates something of an earlier competition over the relative merits of the Ḥijāz and Iraq. Patricia Crone and Michael Cook have both suggested that the Shāfi'i and Ḥanbalī schools were offshoots of earlier Medinan jurisprudence. If this is correct, then it could be inferred that there was originally a sharp dividing line between 'Medinan' (later Mālikī, Shāfi'i and Ḥanbalī) and 'Iraqi' (later Ḥanafī, some Imāmī and Ismā'īlī) opinions on the question of Medina's *ḥaram*.⁹⁷ Such a conclusion, however, would now have to be set against the more recent and persuasive suggestion that the idea that traditionist-jurisprudence originated in Medina may turn out to have been a back projection by later Iraqi traditionist-jurists.⁹⁸ Furthermore, the suggestion that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's jurisprudence at least can be termed 'Medinese' has been questioned.⁹⁹ It is also interesting that a recent study has argued that by the late second/eighth and into the third/ninth centuries, just when the question of Medina's *ḥaram* seems to

caliphs may have bought into some of these claims made by Medinan scholars; see his 'Legal knowledge', 193–4.

⁹⁶ This opposition to Medinan '*amal*' was not only found amongst (proto-)Ḥanafīs, but was also prominent in works by adherents of other *madhhabs*. For Shāfi'i opposition, see briefly Melchert, 'Traditionist-jurists', 401.

⁹⁷ Cook, 'Early Islamic dietary law', 229–30; Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law*, 22.

⁹⁸ Melchert, 'How Hanafism'. If one adheres to Schacht's theory that '*isnāds* show a tendency to grow backwards' (*Origins*, 5), then this idea of the back projection of traditionist-jurisprudence to Medina may gain support from a recent study by Lucas, 'Where Are the Legal *Ḥadīth*', esp. 292, where Lucas demonstrates that nearly all of Ibn Abī Shayba's direct teachers were Iraqi but a little more than half the authorities mentioned in the books of the *Muṣannaf* under study are Meccan or Medinan.

⁹⁹ Melchert, '*Musnad* of Aḥmad', 51.

have become even more contentious, the influence of Medinan scholars (particularly traditionists) was declining.¹⁰⁰ Regional competition, particularly between Hījāzī and Iraqi scholars, may account in part for early disputation over Medina's sanctity – especially its *ḥaram* – but for the debate of the third/ninth century and later other contributing developments need to be sought.

At the very time that the debates over Medina's *ḥaram* start to emerge from our sources, one particularly momentous development in the history of Islamic law was getting under way: the late second/eighth and the whole of the third/ninth centuries saw the most weighty debates among legal scholars, often extremely vitriolic, over the extent of the usefulness of *ḥadīths* in the formulation of the law. In general if slightly simplistic terms, the participants in this debate ranged from the traditionist-jurisprudents ([*fuqahā min*] *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*), who argued that in theory every legal ruling should be derived from a more or less literal reading of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīths* (not necessarily always Prophetic, although the necessity of this also increased over time), to the so-called rationalists (*aṣḥāb al-ra'y*), who were not always as strict about this (at least concerning *ḥadīths*) and reserved a significant place for a jurist's personal reasoning (*ra'y*). The range of opinions should be thought of as a spectrum rather than simply two polar opposites, and there was considerable manoeuvring by those who sought to occupy the 'semi-rationalist' middle ground.¹⁰¹ That said, there was a real methodological conflict going on here, and it was one which dragged in most of the major jurists and *ḥadīth* scholars of the time.¹⁰² If, as a *ḥadīth* in circulation at this time claimed, 'the scholars are

¹⁰⁰ Lucas, *Constructive Critics*, 352–8.

¹⁰¹ Melchert, 'Traditionist-jurisprudents', 393: 'It would be safest to posit that "rationalist" and "traditionist" approaches to jurisprudence were *ideal types*, to which the actual, nascent Ḥanafī and Ḥanbalī traditions of the ninth century respectively approached.' Even so famous a traditionist-jurisprudent as Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, for example, actually appears to have been more receptive in practice to analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) than he was prepared to admit in theory; see Hurvitz, *Formation of Ḥanbalism*, 103–12.

¹⁰² The literature on this conflict is steadily growing into a quite considerable mass, but see especially Schacht, *Origins*, esp. 253–7; Melchert, *Formation*, 1–31; idem, 'Traditionist-jurisprudents'; Hallaq, *History*, 16–35; idem, *Origins and Evolution*, 102–28; Dickinson, *Development*. This conflict cannot, of course, be separated from the closely related issue of the chronology by which the ideas that the Prophet's exemplary custom (*sunna*) trumped those of everybody else as a source of law, and that this *sunna* could be learned best through the study of Prophetic *ḥadīths* transmitted by successive generations of reliable scholars, arose. Again, the modern literature on these issues is vast, but alongside those works just cited a range of opinions can be found in Schacht, *Origins*; Bravmann, *Spiritual Background*, 123–77; Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 30–9; Calder,

the prophets' heirs' (*inna al-'ulamā [hum] warathat al-anbiyā*), then the wider issue at stake in these debates about how that inheritance should be claimed was fundamental.¹⁰³

It is no coincidence that this same period witnessed the escalation of the debates about Medina's *ḥaram* and their spread beyond the confines of a dispute between rival groups of Kufan and Medinan jurists. In Ibn Abī Shayba's (d. 235/849) *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā Abī Ḥanīfa*, the opposite positions regarding Medina's status as a *ḥaram* are directly related to the wider arguments between the traditionist-jurists and the so-called *aṣḥāb al-rā'y* ('rationalists'). These two groups in turn are often held to have contributed most to the nascent Ḥanbalī and Ḥanafī schools of law respectively. The traditionist-jurists, among the more stringent proponents of the theory that the law should derive from the recorded sayings and actions of the Prophet and earliest Muslims, made use of Medina's sanctity and *ḥaram* to further their doctrine. Medina, after all, was the place where the majority of the most reliable of these sayings and actions had been acted out and first recorded, just as it was the site of a *ḥaram* granted to Muḥammad by God because of his singular importance to the revelation of correct doctrine and law. The traditionist-jurists had made an investment in the idea that not only should the law be continuous from the early community of Muḥammad and his Companions to their own day, but also that they were uniquely connected to that community through the proper transmission of *ḥadīths*, which recorded how that early Medinan community had acted.

Several modern historians of late antiquity have argued that the emergence of sacred sites in Christianity from the fourth century CE onwards was intimately linked to developments in theology and shifting locales of authority that took place long after the crucifixion. Robert Markus has argued that Christians during the fourth century CE overcame their earlier reluctance to consider particular places on earth sacred because, following the end of the last of the great persecutions under the emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305 CE) and the accession of the Christian emperor Constantine (r. 306–37 CE), they felt the need to maintain a connection with the community of martyrs that had given such shape to their faith: 'The veneration of martyrs thus served to assure the Christians of a local

Studies; Hallaq, *Origins and Evolution*, esp. 29–68; idem, 'Was al-Shafi'i'; Motzki, 'Fiqh des-Zuhri'; idem, *Origins*; Hakim, 'Conflicting images'; Lucas, 'Where Are the Legal *Ḥadīth*'; Melchert, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, 70–9; idem, 'Early history'.

¹⁰³ For the *ḥadīth*, see Wensinck, *Concordance*, iv, 321 (s.v. "l-m").

church of its continuity with its own heroic, persecuted, past, and the universal Church of its continuity with the age of the martyrs.¹⁰⁴ Others have drawn attention to the competition for the control of martyrs' shrines in conflicts over authority and patronage in late antique Christian societies from the western Mediterranean to the Sasanian empire.¹⁰⁵ It has even been suggested that Jerusalem's and Palestine's sanctity may have been aided by theological debates over the figure of Christ: 'Yet the belief that God had sent his son to walk on this earth and the theological debates about the nature of Christ made physical traces of his incarnation and humanity all the more important.'¹⁰⁶

Now early Muslims were not, in general, as reluctant as Christians to concede higher degrees of sanctity to particular places on earth; the Qur'ān is perfectly content with the existence of some sacred spaces. Nonetheless, it seems that a cognate process was at work in the emergence of Medina as a sacred space among both caliphs (as we have already seen) and late second-/eighth- and third-/ninth-century traditionist-jurists: the latter took up the mantle of fighting for Medina's status as a *ḥaram* as a means of consolidating their own religious and legal authority, in their attempt to maintain a link with the early community of Muḥammad and his Companions, and to emphasise that they, through their methods of transmitting and evaluating others' transmission of knowledge, were the legitimate inheritors of the legal authority of that Medinan community. The insistence on legal and ritual continuity with the early community through the transmission of *ḥadīths* led, as a by-product, to an insistence on the maintenance of that community's *ḥaram* at Medina, the town in which most of the earliest Muslims' great careers took place. The sanctification of time helped to encourage the sanctification of space.¹⁰⁷

The traditionist-jurists' association of the origins of their jurisprudence and authority with Medina and the Ḥijāz comes across very clearly in the work of Ibn Abi Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938), himself originally from Rayy in northern Iran (near modern Tehran). Ibn Abi Ḥātim very insistently identified his own side, the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*, as Ḥijāzīs

¹⁰⁴ Markus, 'How on earth', quotation from 270. On the contested rise of Christian sacred spaces in general, see also, with further bibliography, Brown, *Cult of Saints*; Caseau, 'Sacred landscapes', 40–5; Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred*.

¹⁰⁵ Brown, *Cult of Saints*, 23–49; Payne, 'Emergence'.

¹⁰⁶ Caseau, 'Sacred landscapes', 42.

¹⁰⁷ On the efforts by scholars of the early Abbasid period to sanctify this particular period of Islamic history, see El-Hibri, *Parable and Politics*.

and his opponents, the *ahl al-ra'y*, as Kufans and Iraqis.¹⁰⁸ In his *Ādāb al-Shāfi'i*, Ibn Abī Ḥātim had al-Shāfi'i (d. 204/820) explicitly mention Medina's status as a *ḥaram* as part of a rebuke of the (proto-)Ḥanafī al-Shaybānī's (d. ca. 187/802–3) views of juridical authority.¹⁰⁹ It seems natural to place the third-/ninth-century Iraqi traditionist-jurisprudents' attachment to Medina's *ḥaram* alongside Christopher Melchert's idea that they back-projected their intellectual origins into Medina and the Ḥijāz as a way of establishing their legitimate authority.¹¹⁰

The traditionist-jurisprudents' opponents, on both jurisprudential methodologies and the question of Medina's *ḥaram*, were the *aṣḥāb al-ra'y* whose jurisprudence came to be epitomised by the eponymous founder of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*, Abū Ḥanīfa. Now Ḥanafī legal methodology certainly came to attach considerable importance to *ḥadīths*; this is clearly the case by the time of al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933). It has been said, however, that the Ḥanafīs were 'the last to appeal massively to *ḥadīth*', and some of Abū Ḥanīfa's disciples saw no problem in associating their teacher with anti-*ḥadīth* doctrines.¹¹¹ Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) and al-Shaybānī certainly reserved much more authority than did the traditionist-jurisprudents for the legal decisions worked at by scholars long after the death of Muḥammad and his Companions.¹¹² Relatively few of those later scholars were associated with Medina. Just as the traditionist-jurisprudents' emphasis on *ḥadīths* can be seen to have facilitated their acceptance of earlier Medinan jurists' insistence on Medina's status as a *ḥaram*, so the *aṣḥāb al-ra'y*'s/nascent Ḥanafīs' opposition to their opponents' claims to legal authority facilitated their adoption of the earlier Iraqi jurists' opposition to the idea of Medina's *ḥaram*.¹¹³

If the Medinan/Mālikī, Iraqi-traditionalist/Ḥanbalī, and Iraqi-rationalist/Ḥanafī positions on Medina's sanctity can be so explained, that of the Shāfi'īs – who also accepted Medina's *ḥaram* alongside Mecca's – fits into their founder's claims to legal authority derived from his studies with scholars in both Mecca and Medina. That al-Shāfi'i was not a

¹⁰⁸ Dickinson, *Development*, esp. 3, 41–56, 127.

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter 3, note 61.

¹¹⁰ See note 98.

¹¹¹ Quotation from Melchert, 'Early history', 322.

¹¹² On the attitudes of early (proto-)Ḥanafīs to *ḥadīths*, see Melchert, 'Traditionist-jurisprudents', 388–93; and now Sadeghi, *Logic of Law Making*, 128–36.

¹¹³ That the gradual turn of the Ḥanafīs to the use of *ḥadīths* to form/justify their positive law did not lead them in general to change their position on Medina's *ḥaram* is no surprise, because apparently this process actually changed relatively little Ḥanafī positive law at all; see now Sadeghi, *Logic of Law Making*, 135–6.

full traditionalist-jurisprudent has been made very clear, and the early Shāfi'is can be considered 'semi-rationalists' who attempted, ultimately with great success and considerable consequences for the future development of Sunnī legal theory, to reconcile the reliance on *ḥadīths* with some aspects of the more rationalist framework.¹¹⁴ Their semi-rationalism also explains the animosity of mid third-/ninth-century traditionist-jurists to al-Shāfi'ī and several of his students.¹¹⁵ One recent study, however, has highlighted the fact that al-Shāfi'ī's two most influential teachers were Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. ca. 198/813–14) in Mecca and Mālik b. Anas in Medina; it was even suggested that al-Shāfi'ī was attempting through his work to synthesise Meccan and Medinan learning.¹¹⁶ In this light, his and his followers' acceptance of both Ḥijāzī *ḥarams* makes perfect sense.

That we know so little about the views of other early Sunnī jurists and legal schools makes it hard to evaluate some of the other positions on Medina's *ḥaram* that are reported to us, principally by Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1065) and al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451).¹¹⁷ That Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri (d. 124/742), Ibn Abī Dhī'r (d. 159/775), Ishāq b. Rāhwayh (d. 238/853) and Ibn Ḥazm himself are said to have argued for Medina's status as a *ḥaram* fits with the analysis presented here: al-Zuhri and Ibn Abī Dhī'r were early Medinan scholars and the remaining two are widely reported to have held to many of the traditionalists' ideals regarding *ḥadīths* (although this is a claim easier to demonstrate for Ibn Ḥazm than for Ibn Rāhwayh).¹¹⁸ That Sufyān al-Thawri (d. 161/778) and 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) apparently sided with the nascent Ḥanafī tradition, however, is a little problematic, because both are at times strongly identified as traditionalist opponents of Abū Ḥanīfa and his disciples. This may not be a crucial problem, because it has been convincingly suggested that the later attempts to associate both of these scholars with anti-Abū Ḥanīfa statements was a back projection aimed at preserving the memory of both famous jurists as early adherents of traditionalist-

¹¹⁴ Hallaq, 'Was al-Shafi'i'.

¹¹⁵ Melchert, 'Adversaries', 241–52.

¹¹⁶ Yahia, *Shāfi'ī*, 89–115, 491–8.

¹¹⁷ See Chapter 3, note 48.

¹¹⁸ Dāwūd b. 'Alī b. Khalaf (d. 270/884), the founder of the Zāhiri school to which Ibn Ḥazm acknowledged allegiance, was not really a strict traditionalist, at least not along the same lines as traditionist-jurists such as Aḥmad; see Melchert, *Formation*, 178–90. Ibn Ḥazm, however, did accord a very high degree of respect for *ḥadīths*; see for example *EP*, s.v. 'al-Zāhiriyya' (A.-M. Turki).

jurisprudence.¹¹⁹ Ibn Qutayba's (d. 276/889) *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* includes a brief section on the *aṣḥāb al-ra'y*, which includes Sufyān al-Thawrī – although Ibn al-Mubārak is given among the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* – and one modern historian has noted that, 'It will not do to assert that al-Thawrī and Abū Ḥanīfah represented distinct and hostile schools of law.'¹²⁰

The Imāmī and Ismā'īlī opinions on Medina's *ḥaram* are also tricky to account for. Much Imāmī jurisprudence from this period, as it has come down to us, appears to be semi-rationalist, although presumably there were those who inclined more towards rationalism or traditionalism.¹²¹ This may be why some Imāmī traditions express pro-Medina positions and some argue against Medina's *ḥaram*. Even the most traditionalist of Shī'ī scholars, however, were loathe to restrict applicable traditions to those stemming from the Prophet alone and the vast majority of Shī'ī source texts were transmitted on the authority of the post-Prophetic *imāms*, the last of whom was beyond contact with the majority of his followers from 260/874 and then permanently from all mankind from 329/941. Because many of those *imāms* had not lived, worked and died in Medina, there was less need on that account for their followers to insist on the authority of the community in that town and thus on Medina's high degree of sanctity alongside Mecca's. Early Shī'ism also frequently comes across as thoroughly associated with Kufa and, to a lesser extent, Karbala, both of which Shī'ī scholars promoted as sacred spaces in their own right.¹²² That said, even in those same collections of Imāmī and Ismā'īlī traditions and *fiqh* in which reports limiting the extent of Medina's *ḥaram* can be found, Medina's special place in Islamic history and ritual as a whole comes across very clearly. We saw in Chapter 5 that Shī'ī scholars were among the earliest to transmit even brief guides regulating what visitors to Medina should do and see. The *imāms* of course, by virtue of their direct descent from Muḥammad, had a certain link to Medina, and four of them were buried in the cemetery there, Baqī al-Gharqad. This ensured, in spite of apparent debates about its *ḥaram*,

¹¹⁹ Melchert, *Formation*, 3–6, 14; idem, 'How Hanafism', 323, 332–3, 345–6.

¹²⁰ Melchert, *Formation*, 4; Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 497–8, 511.

¹²¹ On early Shī'ī/Imāmī *fiqh*, see Newman, *Formative Period*; Gleave, 'Between *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*'; and Melchert, 'Imāmīs'. For Ismā'īlī law, see Madelung, 'Sources', 29–40.

¹²² Modarressi, for example, has noted that the perhaps early-to-mid second-/eighth-century *Kitāb Sulaym b. Qays* deals only with the situation in Kufa and wondered if Shī'ism had at that point even spread beyond Kufa in any meaningful way; see his *Tradition and Survival*, 84. On the promotion of Kufa in general, see also Haider, *Origins of the Shī'a*, esp. 231–48; and Friedmann, 'Kūfa is better'.

that Medina remained a sacred space and even emerged as an important holy city for the Shī'a alongside Mecca, Kufa and Karbala.

Although the conflict between traditionist-jurisprudents and their 'rationalist' opponents cannot explain all the debates over every aspect of Medina's sanctity and all of its sacred spaces, the opposing positions taken by several of the parties on Medina's *ḥaram* can plausibly be connected to this. That such a seemingly academic conflict could have an influence on other areas of Muslims' lives and beliefs need not surprise because, 'The struggle between *ḥadīth* and *ra'y* was very sharp (at least in Baghdad), and extended well beyond disagreements over juridical positions.'¹²³ The famous *miḥna*, or 'inquisition', of the mid third/ninth century, launched by 'Abd Allāh al-Ma'mūn (r. 198–218/813–33) near the end of his caliphate and continued until the reign of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–47/847–61), showed how serious the consequences of such a debate could get.¹²⁴ This 'inquisition' pitted the caliphs and their rationalist allies – who certainly included Mu'tazilis but, according to recent research, may have numbered more adherents of one wing of the nascent Ḥanafī school¹²⁵ – against the traditionist-jurisprudents and theologians in a struggle for supreme religious and legal authority. In this struggle, Medina's sanctity was no doubt only one small issue among many much weightier ones, but it was as a corollary of these struggles that legal scholars took up various positions regarding its *ḥaram*.

The final part of this chapter has concentrated on explaining the relatively narrow phenomenon of differing scholarly opinions of Medina's *ḥaram*, which was, on balance, only one aspect of Medina's sanctity. It was by no means a minor aspect, however, and the conclusions drawn fit very well with those made earlier regarding why Marwanid and Abbasid caliphs sought to attach themselves to Medina's holy sites. Caliphs and scholars may have approached the promotion of Medina's sanctity in different ways, but they had rather similar concerns in mind. Gradually, over the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, the fact that the Prophet's career as a focus of immense political, religious and legal authority had taken place in Medina came to be the main reason behind that town's increasingly widespread sanctity, and all of its sacred spaces, therefore, were promoted most eagerly during this period by those caliphs and

¹²³ Melchert, 'Adversaries', 252. That the rise of traditionalism had a significant impact on Arabic historiography, for example, see Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 83–102.

¹²⁴ For an introduction, see *EP*, s.v. 'Miḥna' (M. Hinds).

¹²⁵ Melchert, 'Adversaries', 238–40.

scholars who had most reason to attach themselves to Muḥammad's legacy there in particular. This confluence of widely venerated sacred spaces attached to the memory of the Prophet, as well as the affirmation of the *ḥaram* that enclosed them, turned the whole town into an Islamic holy city. Some Muslims ultimately became so attached to the Prophet's legacy and its connection to Medina that Muḥammad's *ḥaram* there came to surpass even that at Mecca:

Some Medinan would compose a treatise (*kitāb*) on Medina and some Meccan would compose a treatise on Mecca. Each of them would continue to draw attention to the distinction (*faḍīla*) of his place intending to surpass his rival (*ṣāhib*) thus, until the Medinan would defeat the Meccan with one quality that the Meccan was unable to refute. The Medinan would say, 'Everybody is created from the earth (*turba*) where he will be buried after he dies, and the Messenger (ṣ) was created from the earth of Medina'; at that time that earth had a distinction surpassing the rest of the Earth.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Al-Zubayr b. Bakkar *apud* al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-wafā'*, I, 99–100. For more opinions on the *muṣāḍala* between Mecca and Medina, see, for example, Ibn Ḥazm, *Muḥallā*, VII, 279–90; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Hujaj al-mubīna*.

Conclusion: From Yathrib to the Prophet's City

The common narrative of Medina's emergence as a holy city is a simple one. Rejected by the inhabitants of his native Mecca, Muḥammad needed to take his message elsewhere. The Banū Thaḳīf of al-Ṭā'if, about forty miles southeast of Mecca, were offered the opportunity to have their town become the setting for the revelation for God's final message to mankind, but they too rejected Muḥammad. In the end, Muḥammad's only chance of success was offered to him by the inhabitants of Medina, an agricultural oasis in the Ḥijāz, more than two hundred miles to the north. Medina should really have been Muḥammad's first choice, because it already had played a key role in the earlier monotheisation of inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula; two learned Jewish men (*ḥabrān*), so the story goes, prevented the Ḥimyarite king Tubba' from destroying Medina, and then assisted him in the conversion of Yemen to Judaism.¹ Mecca's and al-Ṭā'if's loss was Medina's gain. Medina was sanctified by Muḥammad's presence and creation of a *ḥaram* there like the one he had left behind in Mecca, and by its status as his *dār al-hijra*, his 'home [after] the exile'. After Muḥammad's death, Medina housed his tomb, increasing the town's sanctity, and visitors started to travel there over the rapidly expanding distances from all corners of the Islamic world.

This account may be a simple one, but as we have seen over the preceding chapters it is a deceptively simple one. Many Muslims by the third/ninth century, and no doubt some earlier too, could accept much of the basic outline in the preceding paragraph, although even then not all agreed, for example, on precisely how and why Medina was a sacred

¹ On this story, see Lecker, 'Conversion of Ḥimyar'.

space: Did it have a *ḥaram* like Mecca's? Was pilgrimage recommended to any of its holy sites? Over the first three centuries AH, the doctrines attached to Medina's sanctity were not as static as the foregoing account implies. Muḥammad's sanctification of space in Medina was of a very different order to that scholars and caliphs undertook over the following centuries; it was also enacted for different reasons. Medina's ultimately widespread veneration as an Islamic holy city and the development of various doctrines connected with its sanctity were the results of gradual processes, not solely of a specific set of events that occurred during a very limited moment in time.

To understand anything of Islamic history over the early centuries is exceptionally difficult given the state of our extant sources, but by utilising as broad a range of materials as possible a relatively coherent picture can in some cases emerge. The most important sources for any historical study of early Islamic Medina are the town's extant local histories: Ibn Zabāla, Yaḥyā al-'Aqīqī and Ibn Shabba have left us – even if only, in the case of the first two, through later citations of their lost works – the most comprehensive presentation before the seventh/thirteenth century of the case for the sanctity of Medina in general, as well as of numerous particular sites within. This book could not have been written without the collective effort of all of Medina's pre-modern local historians, but nor could it have been written using the local histories alone. The broadest possible range of sources should be employed in any attempt to understand early Islamic history, and this study has utilised local and universal histories, Prophetic biography, Abbasid-era reconstructions of pre-Islamic Arabia, poetry, inscriptions, geographical treatises, compilations of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*, biographical dictionaries and more besides.

Muḥammad's creation of a *ḥaram* at Medina is one of the very few actions of his career that can be investigated within its historical context, largely as a result of the survival of the 'Constitution of Medina' and the Qur'ān, but also thanks to twentieth- and twenty-first-century research dealing with an ever-expanding corpus of pre-Islamic Arabian inscriptions, several of which address the creation and regulation of sacred spaces. There is a large element of back projection in any such study; the evidence for pre- and very early Islamic Arabia being as scattered as it is, a model of some form is required to interpret it, and most such model are provided in large part by later Islamic institutions and sources. In spite of the numerous potential pitfalls, however, important results can be gleaned. Muḥammad's declaration of a *ḥaram* in Yathrib's *jaʿf* was an intricate part of his mission to convert the Ḥijāz to the more

pristine monotheism of his preaching. To further the promulgation of the new faith, he needed a secure base from which to operate and in which his authority was widely recognised; he also needed to demonstrate his independence from other major powers in the Hijāz, especially Quraysh. His declaration of a *ḥaram* – a recognised pre-Islamic Hijāzī practice of sanctifying space – in Medina helped the achievement of these aims and started the gradual process leading to that town's veneration as a holy city.

The reasons Muḥammad needed to establish a *ḥaram* at Medina barely outlasted his lifetime, and developments in the Islamic world in the centuries after his death brought significant changes to perceptions of Medina's sanctity. A *ḥaram* at Medina came to be venerated by a broad range of Muslim scholars and caliphs, but although its foundation was universally attributed to the Prophet, its boundaries and associated rituals and regulations changed considerably over time; some scholars, mainly but not exclusively associated with the circle forming around Abū Ḥanīfa, even denied its continuing relevance and existence. At the same time as these debates were emerging, the efforts of Medina's local historians and others, including the Marwanid and early Abbasid caliphs, were combining to create a sacred landscape in the area dotted with sites commemorating moments in Muḥammad's Prophetic career and the lifetimes of his Companions and descendants. Caliphs and religious scholars then promoted and/or debated customs of pilgrimage to some of these sites, particularly albeit by no means exclusively the Prophet's grave. It was not purely Muḥammad's *hijra* to and then burial in Medina that made it a holy city, but rather the convergence of these processes of establishing and maintaining a host of sacred spaces throughout the town, all of which continued long after his death.

That so many rulers and scholars from at least the late first/early eighth century onwards have sought to promote, and be seen to be associated with, Medina's sanctity says much about the importance of sacred spaces and the rituals associated with them in the articulation of legitimate political, social, legal and religious authority. It has been argued that central authority possesses an 'inherent sacredness' and thus it is no surprise that monarchs have frequently sought to exercise their divine right to rule through the performance of ceremonial rituals and the patronage of sacred spaces.² Performances of such rituals and the sanctification of

² For 'inherent sacredness', see Geertz, 'Centers', 171. The major study now of ceremonial ritual at the courts of the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs is Marsham, *Rituals*.

space are acts intimately linked to the legitimisation and functioning of sociopolitical systems and of the authorities which uphold and embody them: 'religious symbols, dramatized in rituals or related in myths, are felt somehow to sum up, for those for whom they are resonant, what is known about the way the world is, the quality of the emotional life it supports, and the way one ought to behave while in it.'³ Both caliphs and 'ulamā' laid certain, quite far-reaching claims to legitimate political, social, legal and religious authority over the Muslim community and so both, therefore, had to control the performance of religious rituals and the sacralisation of holy places.

Just as Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs sought to monopolise the right either to lead the *hajj* in person or to deputise that responsibility, so as the *lieux de mémoire* connected to the Prophet's exercise of political, social, legal and religious authority in Medina gained ever more relevance as sacred spaces they had to try to control the symbols of their veneration. This they did, increasingly from the reign of al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 86–96/705–15), by constructing memorials or places of worship to commemorate them and, at times, to visit them. Caliphs were not the only actors in early Islamic society to lay claim to the legitimate inheritance of Muḥammad's authority; religious scholars too had a need to associate themselves clearly with the places where those from who they derived their authority were active. Medina's own scholars and the nascent Mālikī school of law forcefully asserted the authority of their learning as a result of their residence in the town in which the Prophet had formed the first Muslim community, a town which had been sanctified by that historical event. As the pre-eminence of *ḥadīth* as a source of Islamic law came to be ever more loudly asserted, those most enthusiastically behind this assertion came to identify the origins of their learning and authority in the Hījāz and, more precisely, Medina, where the majority of the actions and utterances preserved in the *ḥadīths* had taken place. It was not for nothing that the great fifth-/eleventh-century *ḥadīth* scholar al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) mythologised that Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) – whose *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* came to be recognised as one of the two most important Sunnī compilations of *ḥadīths* – had 'made emendations (*ḥawwala*) to the entries (*tarājīm*) of his *Jāmi'* between the grave of the Prophet (ṣ) and his *minbar*'.⁴ These

³ Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 127; see also 112–14. For a more recent, detailed argument for the significance of ritual in the exercise and legitimisation of authority, see Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 169–238.

⁴ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, II, 9.

'partisans of *ḥadīth*' simultaneously promoted the sanctity of Medina's *ḥaram* which their most prominent opponents – who were often also, not coincidentally, the opponents of Medina's school of law – sought to undermine. Through all of their actions, caliphs and scholars of the early Islamic centuries were both responding to the potential sanctity that could be attached to Medina and reinforcing it;⁵ their efforts – just as much as Muḥammad's – ensured the widespread veneration of its sacred spaces and, therefore, its recognition as a holy city. It was these gradual processes that reinforced the idea that Medina's *ḥaram* was the Prophet's *ḥaram*, and Yathrib was Medina, the Prophet's city, *madīnat al-nabī*.

A primary emphasis of this study has been that the establishment of a given space – be it a small plot such as a grave or an entire town – as sacred or holy, and maintaining its recognition as such, is a dynamic and diachronic process, never the result of a single event in time. If I may risk a counterfactual observation, it is extremely unlikely that Medina would have become the holy city we know today without the Prophet's *hijra* there in 1/622 and his subsequent establishment of the first Muslim polity with its *ḥaram* in the town, but these facts alone were also not enough to make Medina holy, at least not over the centuries after Muḥammad's death. That required further developments, and my argument in this book has focused on the promotion of Medina's sanctity by later rulers and scholars whose broad claims to authority came to be intricately linked to the history and memory of Muḥammad, his *ḥaram* and that polity.

It is relatively common when reading modern literature on holy cities in Islam to encounter the idea that there are three cities venerated as sacred by most Muslims with a hierarchy of sanctity: Mecca is most sacred, then Medina, then Jerusalem. There is a good deal of pre-modern evidence which can be deployed to support this idea: as well as the *ḥadīths* studied by Kister on the legitimacy of travelling to pray at these three sites and on the relative merits of prayer in these three cities, mention could be made of the Ayyubid courtier and litterateur 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣṣahānī's (d. 597/1201) reference, somewhat tortuously, to Jerusalem as 'the third of the two *ḥarams*' (*thālith al-ḥaramayn*).⁶ By the end of the third/ninth century, many Muslims, at least among Sunnīs, might have been able to accept such a tripartite hierarchy of holy cities, but the matter even then

⁵ It is worth remembering Bell's point about ritual and legitimacy here in her *Ritual Theory*, 195: '[R]ather than affirming clear and dogmatic values to impress them directly into the minds of participants, ritual actually constructs an argument, a set of tensions.'

⁶ Kister, 'You shall only set out for three mosques'; 'Imād al-Dīn, *al-Fath al-qussī*, 51.

was far from closed. Alongside those *ḥadīths* studied by Kister which support this hierarchy, there are others which either rearrange the order of the three cities and/or introduce new ones; claims for sanctity were also put forward for Damascus, Kufa, Baghdad and many other cities of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates.⁷ In the fifth-/eleventh-century diary of the Baghdadi Ḥanbalī Ibn al-Bannā' (d. 471/1079), one Ibn Fūrak was criticised for raising the tomb of Abū Ḥanīfa to a position of higher sanctity than Jerusalem.⁸

The conclusions reached in this study can go alongside much research over recent decades into the sanctity of Mecca and Jerusalem in early Islam to show that in the early Islamic centuries, at least, the hierarchy and map of Islamic holy sites was much more complicated than this tripartite picture suggests. Put simply, a wide variety of opinions on the relative sanctity of certain places existed among Muslims, as they do today. Alongside the evidence for the promotion of holy sites outside of these three towns, it seems that Mecca's rise as Islam's paramount sacred site and pilgrimage destination was also a gradual phenomenon, and there is every reason to suggest that for some Muslims of the first couple of centuries AH Jerusalem was a holier city than Medina.⁹ Many scholars have been reluctant to take seriously the claim of al-Ya'qūbī (d. ca. 292/904–5) and others, who suggested that 'Abd al-Malik (r. 65–86/685–705) built the Dome of the Rock as a rival pilgrimage centre to Mecca and the Ḥijāz. This was probably not the sole purpose behind the construction of this shrine,¹⁰ but objections to these accounts on the basis that such an attempt would have been too contrary to Islamic norms to contemplate can safely be put aside. As Chase Robinson succinctly asked of the early Umayyad period, 'How can one say what is orthodox or pious when the rules of orthodoxy and piety had not yet been written?'¹¹ Amikam Elad has demonstrated that we should at least take the claim of al-Ya'qūbī

⁷ In general, as well as Kister, 'You shall only set out for three mosques', see idem, 'Sanctity joint and divided'.

⁸ Makdisi, 'Autograph diary [iv]', 290, 302.

⁹ See Introduction, note 5.

¹⁰ For example, Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 167: '[O]ne does not erect a building as glorious and assertive as this simply to accommodate local pilgrims.' For a recent overview of other possible reasons, see Grabar, *Dome of the Rock*, 19–119.

¹¹ Robinson, *Abd al-Malik*, 98. See also the complaint in Crone, 'First-century concept', 387, that: 'The Umayyad period must be one of the most creative centuries of Islamic history, or indeed any history; and yet it is remembered above all as a century of impious deviation from an established tradition.'

and those who followed him seriously;¹² it might even make sense to see Ibn al-Zubayr's focus on Mecca as an attempt to emphasise that the Ka'ba – access to which he controlled – should be the sole pilgrimage site and sacred space in Islam, to counter Umayyad-controlled Jerusalem.¹³ Jerusalem was clearly a meaningful space to early Muslims, and according to one seventh-century CE Syriac chronicle, Mu'āwiya had the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) as caliph taken there.¹⁴ Which spaces should be considered sacred and why appears to have been hotly debated by Muslims during the first/seventh century, and Medina was only put forward as one contestant among several.

The primary aim of this book has been to draw attention to the gradual and contested nature of the development of ideas attached to Medina's sacred spaces and its emergence as a holy city. I would like to end, however, by urging scholars not to give up on the history of the early Islamic Ḥijāz. There are plenty of resources – notably the wonderfully detailed local histories – for a study of this region of the Arabian Peninsula and, in particular, its development over the first few Islamic centuries as the Muslims' holy land. The emerging primacy of the Ḥijāz in this regard did not go uncontested, but these contests only make the topic all the more interesting and important to our understanding of early Islamic history. The history of the Ḥijāz throughout the early Islamic centuries is much more than one of failed counter-caliphs and Alid rebels.

¹² See esp. 'Why did 'Abd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock'; idem, 'Abd al-Malik'.

¹³ Further discussion in Hawting, 'Hajj'; Robinson, *Abd al-Malik*, 95–100. We should remember in this regard that Ibn al-Zubayr also seems to have been rather uninterested in Medina.

¹⁴ Marsham, *Rituals*, 86–9. Apparently only after the reign of Umar b. 'Abd al-Azīz (r. 99–101/717–20) did caliphs stop using Jerusalem as a site for accession ceremonies; see *ibid.*, 135.

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The Arabic definite article, 'al-', is ignored for the purposes of alphabetisation when it appears anywhere in an individual's name and at the start of the title of a work.

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